

HOOD'S POEMS.

SERIOUS.



THE SERIOUS POEMS

OF

THOMAS HOOD.

WITH A PREFACE BY

THOMAS HOOD THE YOUNGER.

A NEW EDITION



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PREFACE

...
ce :
DURING the lifetime of Thomas Hood
the public would most probably have been
surprised to hear of an edition of his
serious poems. Until within a short
time of his death he was chiefly, if not
entirely, known to them as a jester, with a
command to facile rhyme. Of late years
a plainer justice has been awarded to him,
and—although he will never be forgotten
as a great comic writer, for that would be
impossible—his reputation is now mainly
based upon his graver works.

This, if we may judge from the story of
his literary career, would seem to be the
position he himself desired to achieve.
His wit was the play of a delicate fancy,
that was the Ariel of a kindly and con-

tented disposition, a cheerfulne
the buffets of adversity and ill
an undaunted smile. The mor
of his genius, the true
within him, was what he
to found his name upon.
writings pleased the public
the supply was kept up: for
lived by the pen. "Whims a
were the natural outpourings
disposition, while "Lycus,
of the Midsummer Fairies,"
and Leander," were the
a love for poetry, which ensh
peare and the writers of the
age for special worship.

It would seem to be a type
this man, compelled to jingle the ba.
when he would fain have touched the lyre,
that it was in the comic pages of *Punch*
that he found publication for "The Song
of the Shirt!"

"The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies,"
with other poems, all serious, was published
in 1827, but fell almost stillborn from the
press. The poet bought up the remainder
sheets of the edition himself, "to save it,"

as he said, "from the butter-shops." It may be fairly questioned whether he would ever have so taxed his slender means to have any of his comic writings had they chanced to be thus neglected.

This is not intended to depreciate his position as a wit—in that respect he stands unsurpassed, perhaps unequalled—it is an assertion that as far as may be judged from his life, Hood's ambition was to take a place among the poets, and that to place his serious writings first in any collection is to do what he would have wished done himself.

He is recognised as a poet now, and a master of pathos. In his life the popular taste compelled him to lay aside the tragic lyre too often. Wit was the keen sickle wherewith he was to reap his daily bread, and—not without perhaps a feeling of disappointment—he bent to his task, and plied the keen blade, until his hand grew deft at its employment, and its use became a habit. Only, then, just as when a peasant, roused by a strong sense of injustice, flies to take the field against the oppressor, and arms himself with the

familiar reaping hook on a pike handle, the poet going to battle against the wrong used his strange weapon with unexpected effect, and surprised friends and foes alike with the flashing of unfamiliar wit amid the sternest passages.

It is this that lends a peculiar charm Hood's writings. At the moment when the solemnity of his subject threatens to wring the tense heart strings too powerfully, some vivid play of fancy zigzags across the gloom and while it relieves the sense by its rare suddenness rather intensifies than weakens the effect of the sombre verse.

In like manner the tragic poetry within him would occasionally make itself heard through the daily measures the world demanded of him. The laugh seems at times to end in the choking of a sob. His genius is wild and wayward therefore but his bent was beyond a doubt serious. His face—as he somewhere says—lends a countenance to this conclusion.

It is needless to say the daring of such writing as this threw the critics into a flutter. It is to be feared that as a rule

PREFACE.

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they are most easily offended at novelty :— hence commonplace is allowed to go unscathed while originality rarely fails to make a few foes at least, and many fault-finders. If the lavish—almost reckless—display of punnings, quips, contortions and whims, which formed the peculiarity of his professedly comic writings, was gravely reprehended, it was not likely that his muse, who, instead of giving the immobility of the tragic mask allowed us to see the workings of a human face, with smiles and tears contending, would escape censure. The good sense of an age that prefers acting which copies nature, to the stilted declamation of the old stage, has corrected this erroneous verdict of the critics, although there is an instance on record of a modern writer who remodelled a poem of Hood's by omitting a couple of stanzas which he thought "rather ingenious than poetical." Such a mind could never appreciate the peculiarity of Hood's genius, which combined the quaint with the pathetic, not only in his writings, but in his life, with such rare instinctive delicacy that the conjunction surprises

but does not shock. A deathbed-jest was not the thing we should expect of Hood; and he made none. The quality of his wit had a tinge of melancholy, and one rather sighs than smiles to read how, in his last illness, when a sinapism was being applied to his wasted chest, he turned to his wife with—"It seems a great deal of mustard for so very little meat!"

This blending of the grave with the gay, this strangely compounded essence of human nature, which pervades Hood's writings, makes it no easy task to class his writings under the heads of "serious" and "comic." There are, it is true, some which stand distinctly at the opposite poles, of which we can say without hesitating "this is serious," "this is comic." But the land which divides these poles is a wide border-land, and it is almost impossible in many cases to decide to which limit we are to assign a poem:—take for instance "Miss Kilmansegg," with such earnest work, and such play on words, and on thoughts too, for Hood's are a play of sense as well as sound. A stanza or two from "Miss

Kilmansegg" will exemplify the meaning of this statement.

"Into this world we come like ships,
Launched from the docks and stocks and slips,
For fortune fair or fatal;
And one little craft is cast away
In its very first trip in Balbicombe Bay,
While another rides safe at Port Natal.

What different lots our stars record
This babe to be hailed and wooed as a lord,
And that to be shunned as a leper!
One to the world's wine, honey and corn,
Another, like Colchidæ's native, born
To its vinegar only and pepper.

* * * *

"And the other sex, the tender, the fair,
What wide recesses of fate are there!
While Margaret charmed by a ballad rare
In a garden of Gail reposes,
Poor Peggy hawks nose-grays from street to street
Till, think of that, who find life so sweet!
She hates the smell of roses."

Is this serious or comic? The balance is held to a nicety, and it is this nicety which constitutes the poet's strength. His appreciation of the ludicrous is so keen that he knows not only how to use his

fancy in conjunction with his serious power, but he knows how to limit it, and to avoid where necessary the suggestion of the ridiculous. The lack of the sense to achieve this last is the thing that has occasionally disfigured very fine poems with passages which their writer intended to be serious, but which, by sheer incongruity suggest some strange and irresistibly comic idea to the mind of a reader with any feeling for humour.

Of mannerism in the form into which he moulded his fancy there is little trace in the writings of Thomas Hood. His modes of utterance were not limited. His choice of them was no timid one. His mastery of expression was complete. The selection of the metre for "The Bridge of Sighs," is an instance of this. In any but skilled hands the peculiar measure would have been a certain source of failure: it would have broken into a jog-trot. It heightens the effect of Hood's poem. A smaller man would have overstept the limit of the sublime.

In his serious poems the variety of style is very noticeable. In his early works the

influence of his admiration for the old poets is traceable, "The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies," "Lycus," and "Hero and Leander" are among these. Written a little later, "The Dream of Eugene Aram," one of the most intensely dramatic of his writings, is as different in style as "The Haunted House," or that series of poems of which "The Song of the Shirt" was the earliest, and "The Bridge of Sighs" perhaps the best.

The appearance of "The Song of the Shirt" was undoubtedly the first thing that drew general attention to Hood as a serious poet of great power. Its success was immense and immediate, and its author was not unnaturally proud of it, and of the good it worked for those on whose behalf it was written. There are however among his writings many other poems by which, even for originality of theme and treatment, he could as plainly prove his title to an equally high position among English poets.

T. H.

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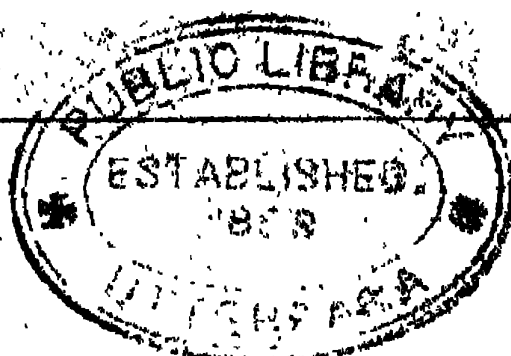
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HOOD'S POEMS.

THE DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM.

'Twas in the prime of summer time,
An evening calm and cool,
And four-and-twenty happy boys
Came bounding out of school;
There were some that ran and some that leapt,
Like troutlets in a pool.

Away they sped with gait and bounds,
And souls untouched by sorrow;
To a level mead they came, and there
They drove the wickets in.
Pleasantly shone the setting sun
Over the town of Lynn.

Like sportive deer they coursed about,
And shouted as they ran,—
Turning to mirth all things of earth,
As only boyhood can;
But the Usher sat remote from all
A melancholy man!

THE DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM.

His hat was off, his vest apart,
To catch heaven's blessed breeze;
For a burning thought was in his brow,
And his bosom ill at ease:
So he lean'd his head on his hands, and read
The book between his knees!

Leaf after leaf he turn'd it o'er,
Nor ever glanced aside,
For the peace of his soul he read that book
In the golden eventide:
Much study had made him very lean,
And pale, and leaden-eyed.

At last he shut the ponderous tome,
With a fast and fervent grasp
He strain'd the dusky covers close,
And fix'd the brazen hasp:
"Oh, God! could I so close my mind,
And clasp it with a clasp!"

Then leaping on his feet upright,
Some moody turns he took,—
Now up the mead, then down the mead,
And past a shady nook,—
And, lo! he saw a little boy
That pored upon a book!

THE DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM.

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"My gentle lad, what 'is't' you read—
Romance or fairy fable?
Or is it some historic page,
Of kings and crowns unstable?"
The young boy gave an upward glance,—
"It is 'The Death of Abel.

The Usher took six hasty strides,
As smit with sudden pain.—
Six hasty strides beyond the place,
Then slowly back again;
And down he sat beside the lad,
And talk'd with him of Cain;

And, long since then, of bloody men,
Whose deeds tradition saves;
Of lonely folk cut off unseen,
And hid in sudden graves;
Of horrid stabs, in groves forlorn,
And murders done in caves;

And how the sprites of injured men
Shriek upward from the sod,—
Aye, how the ghostly hand will point
To show the burial clod;
And unknown facts of guilty acts
Are seen in dreams from God!

THE DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM.

He told how murderers walk the earth
Beneath the curse of Cain,—
With crimson clouds before their eyes,
And flames about their brain :
For blood has left upon their souls
Its everlasting stain !

“ And well,” quoth he, “ I know, for truth,
Their pangs must be extreme,—
Woe, woe, unutterable woe,—
Who spill life’s sacred stream !
For why? Methought, last night, I wrought
A murder, in my dream !

“ One that had never done me wrong—
A feeble man, and old ;
I led him to a lonely field,—
The moon shone clear and cold :
Now here, said I, this man shall die,
And I will have his gold !

“ Two sudden blows with a ragged stick,
And one with a heavy stone,
One hurried gash with a hasty knife,—
And then the deed was done :
There was nothing living at my foot
But lifeless flesh and bone !

THE DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM.

" Nothing but lifeless flesh and bone,
That could not do me ill ;
And yet I fear'd him all the more,
For lying there so still :
There was a manhood in his look,
That murder could not kill !

" And, lo ! the universal air
Seem'd lit with ghastly flame ;—
Ten thousand thousand dreadful eyes
Were looking down in blame :
I took the dead man by his hand,
And call'd upon his name !

" Oh, God ! it made me quake to see
Such sense within the slain !
But when I touch'd the lifeless clay,
The blood gush'd out again !
For every clot, a burning spot
Was scorching in my brain !

" My head was like an ardent coal,
My heart as solid ice ;
My wretched, wretched soul, I knew,
Was at the Devil's price ;
A dozen times I groan'd ; the dead
Had never groan'd but twice !

"And now, from forth the frowning sky,
From the heaven's topmost height,
I heard a voice—the awful voice
Of the blood-avenging Sprite:—
'Thou guilty man! take up thy dead
And hide it from my sight!'

"I took the dreary body up,
And cast it in a stream,—
A sluggish water, black as ink,
The depth was so extreme:—
My gentle boy, remember this
Is nothing but a dream!

"Down went the corse with a hollow plunge,
And vanis'd in the pool:
Anon I cleansed my bloody hands,
And wash'd my forehead cool,
And sat among the mekins young,
That evening in the school.

"Oh, heaven! to think of their white souls,
And mine so black and grim!
I could not share in childish prayer,
Nor join in Evening Hymn:
Like a Devil of the Pit I seem'd
'Mid holy Cherubim!

THE DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM.

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"And peace went with them, one and all,
And each calm pillow spread ;
But Guilt was my grim chamberlain
That lighted me to bed ;
And drew my midnight curtains round,
With fingers bloody red !

"All night I lay in agony,
In anguish dark and deep ;
My fever'd eyes I dared not close,
But stared agast at Sleep :
For Sin had render'd unto her
The keys of Hell to keep !

"All night I lay in agony,
From weary chime to chime,
With one besetting horrid hint,
That rack'd me all the time ;
A mighty yearning, like the first
Fierce impulse unto crime !

"One stern tyrannic thought, that made
All other thoughts its slave ;
Stronger and stronger every pulse
Did that temptation crave,—
Still urging me to go and see
The Dead Man in his grave ?

THE DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM.

"Heavily I rose up, as soon
As light was in the sky,
And sought the black accursed pool
With a wild misgiving eye ;
And I saw the Dead in the river bed,
For the faithless stream was dry.

"Merrily rose the lark, and shook
The dew-drop from its wing :
But I never mark'd its morning flight,
I never heard it sing :
For I was stooping once again
Under the horrid thing.

"With breathless speed, like a soul in chase,
I took him up and ran ;—
There was no time to dig a grave
Before the day began .
In a lonesome wood, with heaps of leaves,
I hid the murder'd man !

"And all that day I read in school,
But my thought was other-where .
As soon as the mid-day task was done,
In secret I was there :
And a mighty wind had swept the leaves,
And still the corse was bare !

THE DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM. 9

"Then down I cast me on my face,
And first began to weep,
For I knew my secret then was one
That earth refused to keep :
Or land or sea, though he should be
Ten thousand fathoms deep.

"So wills the fierce avenging Sprite,
Till blood for blood atones !
Ay, though he's buried in a cave,
And trodden down with stones,
And years have rotted off his flesh,—
The world shall see his bones !

"Oh, God ! that horrid, horrid dream
Besets me now awake !
Again—again, with dizzy brain,
The human life I take ;
And my red right hand grows raging hot,
Like Cranmer's at the stake.

"And still no peace for the restless clay,
Will wave or mould allow ;
The horrid thing pursues my soul,—
It stands before me now !"
The fearful Boy look'd up and saw
Huge drops upon his brow.

FAIR INES.

That very night, while gentle sleep
The urchin eyelids kiss'd,
Two stern-faced men set out from Lynn,
Through the cold and heavy mist;
And Eugene Aram walk'd between,
With gyves upon his wrist.

FAIR INES.

O saw ye not fair Ines?
She's gone into the West,
To dazzle when the sun is down,
And rob the world of rest:
She took our daylight with her,
The smiles that we love best,
With morning blushes on her cheek,
And pearls upon her breast.

O turn again, fair Ines,
Before the fall of night,
For fear the moon should shine alone,
And stars unrivall'd bright;

And blessed will the lover be
That walks beneath their light,
And breathes the love against thy cheek
I dare not even write!

Would I had been, fair Ines,
That gallant cavalier,
Who rode so gaily by thy side,
And whisper'd thee so near!
Were there no bonny dames at home,
Or no true lovers here,
That he should cross the seas to win
The dearest of the dear?

I saw thee, lovely Ines,
Descend along the shore,
With bands of noble gentlemen,
And banners waved before;
And gentle youth and maidens gay,
And snowy plumes they wore;
It would have been a beautiful dream,
—If it had been no more!

Alas, alas, fair Ines,
She went away with song,
With Music waiting on her steps,
And shoutings of the throng;

THE DEATH BED.

But some were sad and felt no mirth,
But only Music's wrong,
In sounds that sang "Farewell, Farewell,
To her you've loved so long."

Farewell, farewell, fair lnes,
That vessel never bore
So fair a lady on its deck,
Nor danced so light before,—
Alas, for pleasure on the sea,
And sorrow on the shore!
The smile that blest one lover's heart
Has broken many more!

THE DEATH BED.

We watch'd her breathing through the night,
Her breathing soft and low,
As in her breast the wave of life
Kept heaving to and fro.

So silently we seem'd to speak,
So slowly moved about,
As we had lent her half our powers
To eke her living out.

Our very hopes belied our fears,
 Our fears our hopes belied—
 We thought her dying when she slept,
 And sleeping when she died

For when the moon came down and red,
 And chill with many ho
 Her quiet eyelids closed so still
 Another month then ours

SONG

—

There is love for the lowly
 And honey for the
 And love for the lowly,
 And love for you and me

There are tears for the many
 And pleasure for the few,
 But let the world pass on, dear,
 There's love for me and you.

AUTUMN.

The Autumn is old,
The sere leaves are flying;
He hath gather'd up gold,
And now he is dying;
Old Age, begin sighing!

The vintage is ripe,
The harvest is heaping;—
But some that have sow'd
Have no riches for reaping:—
Poor wretch, fall a-weeping!

The year's in the wane,
There is nothing adorning,
The night has no eve,
And the day has no morning;—
Cold winter gives warning.

The rivers run chill,
The red sun is sinking,
And I am grown old,
And life is fast shrinking;—
Here's enow for sad thinking.

I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER.

I REMEMBER, I remember,
 The house where I was born,
 The little window where the sun
 Came peeping in at morn ;
 He never came a wink too soon,
 Nor brought too long a day,
 But now, I often wish the night
 Had borne my breath away !

I remember, I remember,
 The roses, red and white,
 The violets, and the lily-cups,
 Those flowers made of light !
 The lilacs where the robin built,
 And where my brother set
 The laburnum on his birth-day,—
 The tree is living yet !

I remember, I remember
 Where I was used to swing,
 And thought the air must rush as fresh
 To swallows on the wing ;
 My spirit flew in feathers then,
 That is so heavy now,
 And summer pools could hardly cool
 The fever on my brow !

THE POET'S PORTION.

I remember, I remember
 The fir trees dark and high:
 I used to think their slender tops
 Were close against the sky -
 It was a child's ignorance,
 But now 'tis little joy
 To know I'm further off from Heav'n
 Than when I was a boy.

THE POET'S PORTION.

WHAT is a mine—a treasury—a dower—
 A magical man of mighty power?

A poet's wife possession is the earth.
 He has the enjoyment of a flower's birth
 Before the ludding—ere the first red streaks,
 And Winter cannot rob him of their cheeks.

Look—he has dawn before other men's
 Twenty bright flushes—ere another lens
 The first of sunlight is abroad—he sees
 Its golden 'lection of the topmost trees,
 And opens the splendid fissures of the morn.

When do his fruits delay, when doth his corn
Linger for harvesting? Before the leaf
Is commonly abroad, in his pil'd sheaf
The flagging poppies lose their ancient flame.

No sweet there is, no pleasure I can name,
But he will sip it first—before the lees
'Tis his to taste rich honey—ere the bees
Are busy with the blooms. He may forestall
June's rosy advent for his coronal,
Before th' expectant buds upon the bough,
Twining his thoughts to bloom upon his brow.

Oh! blest to see the flower in its seed,
Before its leafy presence formed
Leaves are but wings on which the sunbeam flies,
And each thing perishable felle and dies,
Escaped in thought, but his rich thinkings live
Like overflows of immortality
So that what there is steep'd shall perish never
But live and bloom and be a joy forever.

BLANCA'S DREAM.

A VENETIAN STORY.

BLANCA!—fair Bianca!—who could dwell

With safety on her dark and hazel gaze,

Nor find there lurk'd in it a witching spell,

Fatal to balmy nights and blessed days?

The peaceful breath that made the bosom swell,

She turn'd to gas, and set it in a blaze;

Each eye of hers had Love's Enpytion in it,

That he could light his link at in a minute.

So that, wherever in her charms she shone,

A thousand breasts were kindled into flame;

Maidens who cursed her looks forgot their own,

And beaux were turn'd to flambeaux where she came;

All hearts indeed were conquered but her own,

Which none could ever tempt down or tame:

In short, to take on lubber-dasher's hints,

She might have written over it,—“From Flints.”

She was, in truth, the wonder of her sex,

At least in Venice—where with eyes of brown

Tenderly languid, ladies seldom vex

An amorous gentle with a needless frown;

Where gondolas convey guitars by pecks,

And Love at casements climbeth up and down,

Whom for his tricks and custom in that kind, o

Some have considered a Venetian blind

Howbeit, this difference was quickly taught,
 Amongst more youths who had this cruel jailor,
 To hapless Julio—all in vain he sought
 With each new moon his hatter and his tailor;
 In vain the richest padusoy he bought,
 And went in bran new beaver to assail her—
 As if to show that Love had made him *smart*
 All over—and not merely round his heart.

In vain he labour'd thro' the sylvan park
 Bianca haunted in—that where she came,
 Her learned eyes in wandering might mark
 The twisted cypher of her maiden name,
 Wholesomely going thro' a course of bark—
 No one was touch'd or troubled by his flame,
 Except the Dryads, those old maids that grow
 In trees,—like wooden dolls in embryo.

In vain complaining elegies he writ,
 And taught his tuneful instrument to grieve,
 And sang in quavers how his heart was split,
 Constant beneath her lattice with each eve;
 She mock'd his wooing with her wicked wit,
 And slashed his suit so that it match'd his sleeve,
 Till he grew silent at the vesper star,
 And quite despairing hamstring'd his guitar.

Bianca's heart was coldly frosted o'er
With snows unmelting—an eternal sheet,
But his was red within him, like the core
Of old Vesuvius, with perpetual heat;
And oft he long'd internally to pour
His flames and glowing lava at her feet,
But when his burning he began to spout,
She stopp'd his mouth,—and put the *crater* out.

Meanwhile he wasted in the eyes of men,
So thin, he seem'd a sort of skeleton-key
Suspended at death's door—so pale—and then
He turn'd as nervous as an aspen tree:
The life of man is three-score years and ten,
But he was perishing at twenty-three,
For people truly said, as grief grew stronger,
“It could not shorten his poor life—much longer.”

For why, he neither slept, nor drank, nor fed,
Nor relish'd any kind of mirth below
Fire in his heart, and frenzy in his head,
Love had become his universal foe,
Salt in his sugar—nightmare in his bed;
At last, no wonder wretched Julio,
O sorrow-ridden thing, in utter dearth
Of hope,—made up his mind to cut her girth!

For hapless lovers always died of old,
 Sooner than chew reflection's bitter cud;
 So Thisbe stuck herself, what time 'tis told,
 The tender-hearted mulberries wept blood;
 And so poor Sappho, when her boy was cold,
 Drown'd her salt tear-drops in a saltier flood,
 Their fame still breathing, tho' their death be past,
 For those old *suitors* lived beyond their last.

So Julio went to drown,—when life was dull,
 But took his corks, and merely had a bath;
 And once, he pull'd a trigger at his skull,
 But merely broke a window in his wrath;
 And once, his hopeless being to annul
 He tied a pack-thread to a beam of lath—
 A line so ample, 'twas a query whether
 'Twas meant to be a halter or a tether.

Smile not in scorn, that Julio did not thrust
 His sorrows through—'tis horrible to die!
 And come down with our little all of dust,
 That Dun of all the duns to satisfy;
 To leave life's pleasant city as we must,
 In Death's most dreary spunging-house to lie,
 Where even all our personals must go
 To pay the debt of Nature that we owe!

So Julio lived :—'twas nothing but a pet
 He took at life—a momentary spite ;
 Besides, he hoped that Time would some day get
 The better of Love's flame, however bright ;
 A thing that 'Time has never compass'd yet,
 For Love, we know, is an immortal light ;
 Like that old fire, that, quite beyond a doubt,
 Was always in,—for none has found it out

Meanwhile, Bianca dream'd—'twas once when Night
 Along the darkened paths began to creep,
 Like a young Hortensia, whose eyes are taught,
 Altho' in skin as young as a serpent
 The flowers have not yet seen the zephyr's light
 Was gone, for she had not yet leave to sleep,
 And all the little flowers had hid their heads
 Under their wings—singing in their beds.

Lone in her chamber sat the fair-eyed maid,
 By easy slumber pausing through her prayers,
 But listening, oh ! long to a serenade,
 That robbed the saints a little of their shares ;
 For Julio underneath the lattice play'd
 His *Adieu*, and such amorous airs,
 Born only underneath Italian skies,
 Where every hillside has a Bridge of Sighs.

Sweet was the tune—the words were even sweeter—

Praising her eyes, her lips, her nose, her hair,

With all the common tropes wherewith in metre

• The hackney poets "overchamp" their fair."

Her shape was like Diana's, but comelier;

Her brow with Grecian Helen's might compare;

Cupid, alas! was cruel Sagittarius

Julio—the weeping water-nymph Aquarius.

Now, after listening to such landings rare,

'Twas very natural that she should

What it she did, to try to see her play.

To ask her mirror for a portrait

'Twas a large mirror, none the less, and wide

Reflecting her at once from front to rear

And there she caught up to that ghastly face

That show'd her front like though it "gave her back."

And long her lovely eyes were held in thrall,

By that dem page where in the woman reads:

That Julio was no flatterer, none at all,

She told herself--and then she told her beads;

Meanwhile, the netes in tribly let fall

Two curtains later than the lily bed;

For sleep had crept and hid her in bewies,

Just at the half-way milestone of her prayers.

Then like a drooping rose so bended she,
 Till her bow'd head upon her hand reposed;
 But still she plainly saw, or seem'd to see,
 That fair reflection, tho' her eyes were closed,
 A beauty bright as it was wont to be,
 A portrait Fancy painted while she dozed:
 'Tis very natural, some people say,
 To dream of what we dwell on in the day.

Still shone her face -- yet not, alas! the same,
 But 'gan some dreary touches to assume,
 And sadder thoughts with sadder changes came --
 Her eyes resign'd their light, her lips their bloom,
 Her teeth fell out, but her soul did the same,
 Her cheeks were tinged with bill, her eyes with
 rhoun:
 There was a throbbing at her heart within,
 For, oh! there was a throbbing in her chin.

And lo! upon her sad desponding brow,
 The cruel trenches of the dying age,
 With seams, but most unseemly, 'gan to show
 Her place was booked for the seventh stage;
 And where her raven tresses used to flow,
 Some locks that Time had left her in his rage,
 And some mock ringlets, made her forehead shaggy,
 A compound (like our Psalms) of *Tite* and Braidy.

Then for her shape—alas! how Saturn wrecks,
 And bends, and corkscrews all the frame about,
 Doubles the hams, and crooks the straightest necks,
 Draws in the nape, and pulls forth the snout,
 Makes backs and stomachs concave or convex:
 Witness those pensioners call'd In and Out,
 Who all day watching fast and second rates,
 Quaintly unbend their claws—but grow no straighter.

So Time with his Lincea hault, and maul
 Her shape a bow that once was like an arrow;
 His iron hand upon her chin befall,
 And twisted all away her tapering jaw.
 In truth it was a change—the sad old
 The holy Pope himself had grown too slow,
 But spectacles and palsy seem'd to make her
 Something between a Glasite and a Quaker.

Her grief and pall meanwhile were quite extreme,
 And she had ample reason for her trouble;
 For what sad maiden can endure to seem
 Set in for singleness, though growing double?
 The fancy madden'd her; but now the dream,
 Grown thin by getting bigger, like a bubble,
 Burst,—but still left some fragments of its size,
 That like the soapsuds, smatted in her eyes.

And here—just here—as she began to heed
The real world, her clock chimed out its score;
A clock it was of the Venetian breed,
That cried the hour from one to twenty-four;
The works moreover standing in some need
Of workmanship, it struck some dozen more;
A warning voice that clench'd Bianca's fears,
Such strokes referring doubtless to her years.

At fifteen chimes she was but half a nun,
By twenty she had quite renounced the veil;
She thought of Julio just at twenty-one,
And thirty made her very sad and pale,
To paint that ruin where her charms would run;
At forty all the maid began to balk.
And thought no higher, as the late dream cross'd her,
Of single blessedness, than single Glister.

And so Bianca changed; the next sweet even,
With Julio in a black Venetian bark,
Row'd slow and stealthily—the hour, eleven,
Just sounding from the tower of old St. Mark;
She sat with eyes turn'd quietly to heav'n,
Perchance rejoicing in the grateful dark
That veil'd her blushing cheek,—for Julio brought her,
Of course, to break the ice upon the water.

But what a puzzle is one's serious mind
 To open;—oysters, when the ice is thick,
 Are not so difficult and disinclined;
 And Julio felt the declaration stick
 About his throat in a most awful kind;
 However, he contrived by bits to pick
 His trouble forth,—much like a rotten cork
 Groped from a long-neck'd bottle with a fork.

But love is still the quickest of all readers;
 And Julio spent besides those lines profuse,
 That English telegraphs and foreign pleaders,
 In help of language are so apt to use —
 Arms, shoulders, fingers, all were interested;
 Nods, shrugs, and bends, — Bianca could not choose
 But soften to his suit with more facility,
 He told his story with so much agility.

“Be thou my park, and I will be thy dear,”
 (So he began at last to speak or quote;)
 “Be thou my bark, and I thy condolier,”
 (For passion takes this figurative note;)
 “Be thou my light, and I thy chandelier;
 Be thou my dove, and I will be thy cote;
 My lily be, and I will be thy river;
 Be thou my life—and I will be thy liver.”

This, with more tender logic of the kind,
 He pour'd into her small and shell-like ear,
 That timidly against his lips inclined;
 Meanwhile her eyes glanced on the silver sphere
 That even now began to steal behind
 A dewy vapour, which was lingering near,
 Wherein the dull moon crept all dim and pale,
 Just like a virgin putting on the veil:—

Bidding adieu to all her sparks—the stars,
 That erst had woo'd and woo'd her in her train,
 Saturn and Hesperus, and brilliant Mars—
 Never to flit within her ready eyes again.
 Meanwhile, reminding of the convent bays,
 Bianca did not watch these signs in vain,
 But turn'd to look at the dark eclipse,
 With words, like verbed kisses, on her lips.

He took the hint full speedily, and back'd
 By love, and night, and the occasion's meetness,
 Bestow'd a something on her cheek that smack'd
 (Though quite in silence of ambrosial sweetness;
 That made her think all other kisses lack'd
 Till then, but what she knew not, of completeness:
 Being used but sisterly salutes to feel,
 Insipid things—like sandwiches of veal.

A RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW.

29

He took her hand, and soon she felt him wring
The pretty fingers all instead of one ;
Anon his stealthy arm began to cling
About her waist that had been clasp'd by none :
Their dear confessions I forbear to sing,
Since cold description would but be untrue ;
For bliss and Irish wretches have the power,
In twenty minutes, to lose half an hour !

A RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW.

On, when I was a tiny boy,
My day and nights were full of joy,
My mates were blithe and kind !—
No wonder that I sometimes sigh,
And dash the tear-drop from my eye,
To cast a look behind !

A hoop was an eternal round
Of pleasure. In those days I found
A top a joyous thing :
But now those past delights I drop,
My head, alas ! is all my top,
And careful thoughts the string.

My marbles—once my bag was stored,—
Now I must play with Elgin's lord,
With Theseus for a taw!
My playful horse has slipt his string,
Forgotten all his capering,
And harness'd to the law!

My kite—how fast and far it flew!
Whilst I, a sort of Pucklin, drew
My pleasure from the sky!
'Twas paper'd o'er with studious themes,
'The tasks I wrote—my present dreams
Will never see the light!

My boys are wing'd, tall and dead;
My damps are made of more than lead;
My fights soon find a fall,
My fears prevail, my tenses droop,
Joy never cometh with a leap
And seldom with a coup!

My football's laid upon the shelf,
I am a shuttlecock myself
The world knocks to and fro;—
My archery is a tunclearn'd,
And gait against myself has turn'd
My arrows and my bow!

A RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW.

31

No more in noontide sun I bask ;
My authorship's an endless task,
My head 's ne'er out of school :
My heart is pain'd with scorn and slight,
I have too many foes to fight,
And friends grown strangely cool !

The very chum that shared my cake
Holds out so cold a hand to shake,
It makes me shunk and sigh :
On this I will not dwell and hang,—
The changeling would not feel a pang
Though these should meet his eye !

No skies so blue or so serene
As then,—no leaves look half so green
As clothed the playground tree !
All things I loved are alter'd so,
Nor does it ease my heart to know
That change resides in me !

Oh for the garb that mark'd the boy,
The trousers made of corduroy,
Well ink'd with black and red ;
The crowless hat, ne'er deem'd an ill—
It only let the sunshine still
Repose upon my head !

Oh for the riband round the neck!
 The careless dogs'-ears apt to deck
 My book and collar both!
 How can this formal man be styled
 Merely an Alexandrine child,
 A boy of larger growth?

Oh for that small, small beer anew!
 And (heaven's own type) that mild sky-blue
 That wash'd my sweet meals down;
 The master even!—and that small Turk
 That fagg'd me!—work is now my work—
 A lag for all the town!

Oh for the lessons learn'd by heart!
 Ay, though the very birch's smart
 Should mark those hours vain,
 I'd "kiss the rod," and be resign'd
 Beneath the stroke, and even find
 Some sugar in the cane!

The Arabian Nights rehearsed in bed!
 The Fairy Tales in school-time read,
 By stealth, 'twixt verb and noun!
 The angel form that always walk'd
 In all my dreams, and look'd and talk'd
 Exactly like Miss Brown!

The *omne bene*—Christmas come!
 The prize of merit, won for home—
 Merit had prizes then!
 But now I write for days and days,
 For fame—a deal of empty praise,
 Without the silver pen!

Then "home, sweet home!" the crowded coach—
 The joyous shout—the loud approach—
 The winding horns like ram's!
 The meeting sweet that made me thrill,
 The sweetmeats, almost sweeter still,
 No 'salties' to the cup of life—

When that I was a tiny boy
 My days and nights were full of joy,
 My mates were lambs and chicks!
 No wonder that I sometimes sigh,
 And dash the tear-drops from my eye,
 To cast a look behind!

 RUTH.

SHE stood breast high amid the corn
 Clasp'd by the golden light of morn,
 Like the sweetheart of the sun,
 Who many a glowing kiss had won.

On her cheek an autumn flush,
 Deeply ripen'd;—such a blush
 In the midst of brown was born,
 Like red poppies grown with corn.

Round her eyes her tresses fell,
 Which were blackest none could tell,
 But long lashes veil'd a light,
 That had else been all too bright,

And her hat, with shady brim,
 Made her mossy forehead dim;—
 Thus she stood amid the stooks,
 Praising God with sweetest looks:—

Sure, I said, Heaven did not mean,
 When a reep thou shouldst but glean,
 Lay thy sheaf down and come,
 Shaken; harvest and thy home.



ODE TO MELANCHOLY.



Come, let us set our careful breasts,
 Like Philomel, against the thorn,
 To aggravate the inward grief,
 That makes her accents so forlorn;
 The world has many cruel points,
 Whence our bosoms have been torn,

And there are dainty themes of grief,
In sadness to outlast the morn,—
True honour's death, affection's death,
Neglectful pride, and cankering scorn,
With all the piteous tales that tears
Have water'd since the world was born.

The world!—it is a wilderness,
Where tears are hung on every tree;
For thus my gloomy phantasy
Makes all things weep with me!
Come let us sit and watch the sky,
And fancy clouds, where no clouds be;
Grief is enough to blot the eye,
And make heaven black with misery.

Why should birds sing such merry notes,
Unless they were more blest than we?
No sorrow ever chokes their throats,
Except sweet nightingale; for she
Was born to pain our hearts the more
With her sad melody.
Why shines the Sun, except that he
Makes gloomy nooks for grief to hide,
And pensive shades for Melancholy,
When all the earth is bright beside?
Let clay wear smiles, and green grass wave,
Mirth shall not win us back again,

Whilst man is made of his own grave,
And fairest clouds but gilded rain!

I saw my mother in her shroud,
Her cheek was cold and very pale;
And ever since I've look'd on all
As creatures doom'd to fail!
Why do buds open except to die?
Ay, let us watch the roses wither,
And think of our loves' cheeks:
And oh! how quickly time doth fly
To bring death's wanton kinsman!
Minutes, hours, days, and weeks,
Months, years, and ages, sink to nought;
An age past is but a thought!

Ay, let us think of him as he
That, with a coffin for a bed,
Row'd down the Stygian moat,
And for our sakes chose a tomb.
There's dust now for many skull
To chafe with blood a raven plume;
And for the saddest funeral thoughts
A winding-sheet hath ample room,
Where Death, with his keen-pointed style,
Hath writ the common doom.
How wide the yew-tree spreads its gloom,
And o'er the dead lets fall its dew,
As if it tears it wept for them,

The many human families
That sleep around its stem!

How cold the dead have made these stones,
With natural drops kept ever wet!
Lo! here the best—the worst—the world
Doth now remember or forget,
Are in one common turn made,
And love and hate are calmly met;
The lowliest eyes that ever shone,
The fairest hand and loveliest feet
Is't not enough to vex our souls,
And fill our eyes, that we have set
Our love upon a rose-stem,
Our hearts upon a flower?
Blue eyes, and cheeks, and hair, are fiercer yet,
And some flies at their swift decay
Before than I we must meet.
The roses bud and bloom again,
But Love may haunt the grave of Love,
And watch the mould in vain.

O clasp me, sweet, whilst thou art mine,
And do not take my tears amiss;
For tears must flow to wash away
A thought that shows so stern as this:
Forgive, if sometime I forget,
In woe to come, the present bliss.

As frightened Proserpine let fall
 Her flowers at the sight of Dis :
 Ev'n so the dark and bright will kiss—
 The sunniest things throw sternest shade,
 And there is ev'n a happiness
 That makes the heart afraid !

Now let us with a spell invoke
 The full-orb'd moon to grieve our eyes ;
 Not bright, not bright, but, with a cloud
 Lapp'd all about her, let her rise
 All pale and dim, as if from rest
 The ghost of the late banish'd sun
 Had crept into the skies.
 The Moon—she is the source of sighs,
 The very face to make us sad,
 If but to think in other times
 The same who quiet look'd the night,
 As if the world held no time base,
 Of vile and mean, of good and bad ;
 The same fair light that shone in streams,
 The fairy leop that charm'd the lad ;
 For so it is, with spent delights
 She taunts men's brain, and makes them mad.

All things are touch'd with Melancholy,
 Born on the secret soul's mistrust,
 To feel her fan ethereal wings
 Weigh'd down with vile degraded dust ;

LAMENT FOR DECLINE OF CHIVALRY. 39

Even the bright extremes of joy
Bring on conclusions of disgust,
Like the sweet blossoms of the May,
Whose fragrance ends in must.
O give her, then, her tribute just,
Her sighs and tears, and musings holy ;
There is no music in the life
That sounds with idiot laughter folly ;
There's not a string attuned to mirth,
But has its chord in Melancholy.

LAMENT FOR THE DECLINE OF CHIVALRY.

WELL hast thou cried departed Burke,
All chivalrous romantic work
Is ended now and past ! —
That iron age—which some have thought
Of metal rather overwrought —
Is now all overcast !

Ay ! where are those heroic knights
Of old—those armadillo wights
Who wore the plated vest ? —
Great Charlemagne and all his peers
Are cold—enjoying with their spears
An everlasting rest !

40 LAMENT FOR DECLINE OF CHIVALRY.

The bold King Arthur sleepeth sound
So sleep his knights who gave that Round
Old Table such éclat!
O, Time has pluck'd the plummy brow!
And none engage at tourneys now
But those that go to law!

Grim John o' Gaunt is quite gone by,
And Guy is nothing but a Guy,
Orlando he is forlorn!—
Bold Sidney, and his kinsmen,
Those "early champions"—what are they
But legends without a morn?

No Percy is left now perforce,
Like those of old, unbuckling spurs—
That name is now a name
Smuggled, alone, by chance,
Are all that once were a lance
To touch a lady's eye!

Alas for Lion-Hearted Dick,
That cut the Moslems to the quick,
His weapon lies in peace:
O, it would warm them in a trice,
If they could only have a spice
Of his old mace in Greece!

LAMENT FOR DECLINE OF CHIVALRY. 41

The famed Rinaldo lies a-cold,
And Tancred too, and Godfrey bold,
That sealed the holy well!
No Saracen meets Paladin,
We hear of no great Sclandin,
But only grow the small!

Our *Cicero*, too, have dwindled since
To penny things—sat our Black Prince
Historic pens would scoff;
The only one we moderns had
Was nothing but a Sandwich lad,
And measles took him off!

Where are those old and feudal clods,
Their pikes, and tolls and partisans,
Their hauberts, jerkins, bills?
A battle was a battle then,
A breathing piece of work; but men
Fight now—with powder puffs.

The curtal-axe is out of date;
The good old crossbow bends—to Fate;
'Tis gone, the archer's craft!
No tough arm bends the springing yew,
And jolly draymen slide, in lieu
Of Death, upon the shaft!

42 LAMENT FOR DECLINE OF CHIVALRY.

The spear, the gallant tilter's pride,
The rusty spear is laid aside,—
 O, spits now domineer!
The coat of mail is left alone,—
And where is all chain armour gone?
 Go ask a Brighton Pier.

We fight in ropes, and not in lists,
Bestowing hand-cuff with our fists,
 A low and vulgar art!
No mounted man is overthrown—
A tilt—it is a thing unknown—
 Except upon a cart!

Meddles is the 'bouncing bar',
Clad like a lion in a teedy war,
 For sending steel's 'phances!
Methinks I hear the man's cry still,
"Tis but the guard of the crew,
 That baffles the 'b defiance."

In carols when will cavaliers
Set ringing helmets by the ears,
 And scatter phances about?
Or blood—if they are in the vein?
'That tap will never run again—
 Alas! the *Casque* is out!

TO A CHILD EMBRACING HIS MOTHER. 43

No iron-crackling now is scored
By dint of battle-axe or sword,
To find a vital place--
Though certain doctors still pretend,
Awhile before they kill a friend,
To labour through his case.

Farewell, then, ancient men of might!
Crusader, errant squire, and knight!
Our coats and custom soften;
To rise would only make you weep--
Sleep on, in rusty-iron sleep,
As in a safety coffin!

TO A CHILD EMBRACING HIS MOTHER.

Love thy mother, little one!
Kiss and clasp her neck again.--
Hereafter she may have a son
Will kiss and clasp her neck in vain.
Love thy mother, little one!

Gaze upon her living eyes,
And mirror back her love for thee,--
Hereafter thou mayst shudder sighs
To meet them when they cannot see.
Gaze upon her living eyes!

Press her lips the while they glow
 With love that they have often told,—
 Hereafter thou mayst press in woe,
 And kiss them till thine own are cold.
 Press her lips the while they glow!

Oh, revere her raven hair!
 Although it be not silver-grey;
 Too early Death, led on by Care,
 May snatch save one dear lock away.
 Oh! revere her raven hair!

Pray for her at eve and morn,
 That Heaven may long the stroke defer,—
 For thou mayst live the hour to mourn
 When thou wilt ask to die with her.
 Pray for her at eve and morn!

TO ———

COMPOSED AT BOTTLEHAM.

I GAZE upon a city,—
 A city new and strange,—
 Down many a watery vista
 My fancy takes a range;

From side to side I saunter,
And wonder where I am;
And can *you* be in England,
And *I* at Rotterdam!

Before me lie dark waters
In broad canals and deep,
Whereon the silver moonbeams
Sleep, restless in their sleep;
A sort of vulgar Venice
Reminds me where I am:
Yes, yes, you're in England,
And I'm at Rotterdam.

Tall houses with quaint gables,
Where frequent windows shine,
And quays that lead to bridges,
And trees in formal line,
And masts of spicy vessels
From western Sumatra,
All tell me you're in England,
But I'm in Rotterdam.

Those sailors, how outlandish
The face and form of each!
They deal in foreign gestures,
And use a foreign speech;
A tongue not learn'd near Isis,
Or studied by the Cam,

Declares that you're in England,
And I'm at Rotterdam.

And now across a market
My doubtful way I trace,
Where stands a solemn statue,
The Genius of the place ;
And to the great Erasmus
I offer my salaam ;
Who tells me you're in England,
But I'm at Rotterdam.

The coffee room is open—
I mingle in its crowd.—
The dominoes are noisy—
The hookahs raise a cloud ;
The flavour, none of Peaton's,
That mingles with my dram,
Reminds me you're in England,
And I'm at Rotterdam.

Then here it goes, a bumper—
The toast it shall be mine,
In Schiedam, or in sherry,
Tokay, or hock of Rhine ;
It well deserves the brightest,
Where sunbeam ever swam—
"The Girl I love in England"
I drink at Rotterdam!

STANZAS.

Is there a bitter pang for love removed,
 Oh God! The dead love doth not cost more tears
 Than the alive, the loving, the beloved—
 Not yet, not yet beyond all hopes and fears!
 Would I were laid
 Under the shade
 Of the calm grave, and the long grass of years,—
 That love might die with sorrow —I am sorrow;
 And she, that loves me tenderest doth pass
 Most poison from my cruel lips, and bane
 Only new anguish from the old caress,
 Oh, this world's grief,
 Hath no relief,
 In being wrong from a great happiness.

Would I had never filled thine eyes with love,
 For love is only tears: would I had never
 Breathed such a curse-like blessing as we prove;
 Now, if "Farewell" could bless thee, I would sever!
 Would I were laid
 Under the shade
 Of the cold tomb, and the long grass for ever!

SONG FOR THE NINETEENTH.

The morning sky is hung with mist,
The rolling drum the street alarms,
The host is paid, his daughter kiss'd,
So now to arms, so now to arms.

Our evening bowl was strong and stiff,
And may we get such quarters oft,
I ne'er was better lodged, for if
The straw was hard, the maid was soft.

So now to arms, to arms, to arms,
And fare you well, my little dear,
And if they ask who won your charms,
Why say 'twas in your Nineteenth Year.

ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.

A WANDERER, Wilson, from my native land,
Remote, O Rae, from godliness and thee,
Where rolls between us the eternal sea,
Besides some furlongs of a foreign sand,—

Beyond the broadest Scotch of London Wall;
Beyond the loudest Saint that has a call;
Across the wavy waste between us stretch'd,
A friendly missive warns me of a stricture,
Wherein my likeness you have darkly etch'd,
And though I have not seen the shadow sketch'd,
Thus I remark prophetic on the picture.

I guess the features:—in a line to paint
Their moral ugliness, I'm not a saint.
Not one of those self-constituted saints,
Quacks—not physicians—in the cure of souls,
Censors who sniff out mortal taints,
And call the devil over his own coals—
Those pseudo Privy Councillors of God,
Who write down judgments with a pen hard-nibb'd
Ushers of Beelzebub's Black Rod,
Commending sinners, not to ice thick-ribb'd,
But endless flames, to scorch them up like flax—
Yet sure of heav'n themselves, as if they'd cribb'd
Th' impression of St. Peter's keys in wax!

Of such a character no single trace
Exists, I know, in my fictitious face;
There wants a certain cast about the eye;
A certain lifting of the nose's tip;
A certain curling of the nether lip,
In scorn of all that is, beneath the sky

In brief it is an aspect deleterious,
 A face decidedly not serious,
 A face profane, that would not do at all
 To make a face at Exeter Hall,—
 That Hall where bigots rant, and cant, and
 pray,
 And land each other face to face,
 Till ev'ry fath'ring-candle ray
 Conceives itself a great gas-light of grace.

Well!—be the graceless lineaments confess!
 I do enjoy this bounteous beautiful earth;
 And dote upon a jest
 "Within the limits of becoming mirth;"—
 No solemn sanctimonious face I pull,
 Nor think I'm pious when I'm only bilious—
 Nor study in my sanctum supercilious
 To frame a Sabbath Bill or forge a Bull.
 I pray for grace—repeat each sinful act—
 Peruse, but underneath the rose, my Bible;
 And love my neighbour far too well, in fact,
 To call and twit him with a godly tract
 That's turn'd by application to a libel.
 My heart ferments not with the bigot's leaven,
 All creeds I view with toleration thorough,
 And have a horror of regarding heaven
 As anybody's rotten borough.

ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.

51

What else? no part I take in party fray,
With tropes from Billingsgate's slang-whanging tartars,
I fear no Pope--and let great Ernest play
At Fox and Goose with Fox's Martyrs!
I own I laugh at over-righteous men,
I own I shake my sides at ranters,
And treat sham-Abr'ams with wicked banTERS,
I own, that there are such--but then
It's when I've got my wine-- say d--- canters!

I've no ambition to enact the spy
On fellow souls, a Spiritual Pry--
'Tis said that people ought to guard their noses,
Who thrust them into matters none of theirs;
And tho' no delicacy decomposes
Your Saint, yet I consider faith and pray'rs
Amongst the privatest of men's affairs.

I do not hash the Gospel in my books,
And thus upon the public mind intrude it,
As if I thought, like Otaheitan cooks,
No food was fit to eat till I had chew'd it.
On Bible stilts I don't affect to stalk;
Nor lard with Scripture my familiar talk,--
For man may pious texts repeat,
And yet religion have no inward seat;
'Tis not so plain as the old Hill of Howth,
A man has got his belly full of meat
Because he talks with victuals in his mouth!

Mere verbiage,—it is not worth a carrot
 Why, Socrates—or Plato—where's the odds?—
 Once taught a jay to supplicate the Gods,
 And made a Polly-theist of a Parrot!

A mere professor, spite of all his cant, is
 Not a whit better than a Mantis,—
 An insect, of what clime I can't determine,
 That lifts its paws most parson-like, and thence,
 By simple savagery—thro' sheer pretence—
 Is reckon'd quite a saint amongst the vermin.

But where's the reverence, or where the *hons*,
 To ride on one's religion thro' the lobby,
 Whether a stalking-horse or hobby,
 To show its pious paces to "the House?"

I honestly confess that ' would hinder
 The Scottish member's legislative rigs,
 That spiritual Pinder,
 Who looks on erring souls as straying pigs,
 That must be lash'd by law, wherever found,
 And driven to church, as to the parish pound.
 I do confess, without reserve or wheedle,
 I view that grovelling idea as one
 Worth y some parish clerk's ambitious son,
 A charity-boy, who longs to be a beadle.

On such a vital topic sure 'tis odd
How much a man can differ from his neighbour :
One wishes worship freely giv'n to God,
Another wants to make it statute-labour—
The broad distinction in a line to draw,
As means to lead us to the skies above.
You say—Sir Andrew and his love of law,
And I—the Saviour with his law of love.

Spontaneously to God should tend the soul,
Like the magnetic needle to the Pole ;
But what were that intrinsic virtue worth,
Suppose some fellow, with more zeal than knowledge,
Fresh from St. Andrew's College,
Should nail the conscious needle to the north ?

I do confess that I abhor and shrink
From schemes, with a religious willy-nilly,
That frown upon St. Giles's sins, but blink
The peccadilloes of all Piccadilly —
My soul revolts at such a bare hypocrisy,
And will not, dare not, fancy in accord
The Lord of Hosts with an Exclusive Lord
Of this world's aristocracy.
It will not own a notion so unholy,
As thinking that the rich by easy trips
~~May~~ go to heav'n, whereas the poor and lowly
Must work their passage as they do in ships.

One place there is—beneath the burial sod
 Where all mankind are equalised by death;
 Another place there is—the Fane of God,
 Where all are equal, who draw living breath;
 Juggle who will *elsewhere* with his own soul,
 Playing the Judas with a temporal dole—
 He who can come beneath that awful cope,
 In the dread presence of a Maker just,
 Who metes to ev'ry piach of human dust
 One even measure of immortal hope—
 He who can stand within that holy door,
 With soul unbow'd by that pure spirit-level,
 And frame unequal laws for rich and poor,—
 Might sit for Hell and represent the Devil!

Such are the solemn sentiments, O Rae,
 In your last Journey-Work, perchance you ravage,
 Seeming, but in more courtly terms, to say
 I'm but a heedless, creedless, godless savage;
 A very *Guy*, deserving fire and faggots,—
 A Scotter, alway on the grin,
 And sadly given to the mortal sin
 Of liking Mawworms less than merry maggots!

The humble records of my life to search,
 I have not herded with mere pagan beasts;
 But sometimes I have “sat at good men's feasts,”
 And I have been “where bells have knoll'd to church.”

ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.

15

Dear bells! how sweet the sounds of village bells
When on the undulating air they swim!
Now loud as welcomes! faint, now, as farewells!
And trilling all about the breezy dells
As flutt'ring by the wings of Cherubim.
Meanwhile the bees are chanting a low hymn;
And lost to sight th' ecstatic lark above
Sings, like a soul beatified, of love,—
With, now and then, the coo of the wild pigeon;—
O Pagan, Heathens, Infidels and Doubters!
If such sweet sounds can't woo you to religion,
Will the harsh voices of church cads andouters?

A man may cry "Church! Church!" at ev'ry word,
With no more piety than other people—
A daw's not reckon'd a religious bird
Because it keeps a-cawing from a steeple.
The Temple is a good, a holy place,
But quacking only gives it an ill savour;
While saintly mountebanks the porch disgrace,
And bring religion's self into disfavour!

Behold yon servitor of God and Mammon.
Who, binding up his Bible with his Ledger,
Blends Gospel texts with trading gammon
A black-leg saint, a spiritual hedger,
Who backs his rigid Sabbath, so to speak,
Against the wicked remnant of the week,

A saving bet against his sinful bias—
 "Rogue that I am," he whispers to himself,
 "I lie—I cheat—do anything for pelf,
 But who on earth can say I am not pious?"

In proof how over-righteousness re-acts,
 Accept an anecdote well based on facts.
 One Sunday morning—(at the day don't fret)—
 In riding with a friend to Ponder's End
 Outside the stage, we happen'd to commend
 A certain mansion that we saw 'To Let.
 "Ay," cried our coachman, with our talk to grapple,
 "You're right! no house along the road comes nigh it.
 'Twas built by the same man as built yon chapel,
 And master wanted once to buy it,—
 But t'other driv the bargain much too hard—
 He ax'd sure-ly a sum prodigious!
 But being so particular religious,
 Why, *that*, you see, put ma ter on his guard!"

Church is "a little heav'n below,
 I have been there and still would go,"—
 Yet I am none of those who *think* it odd
 A man can pray unbidden from the cassock,
 And, passing by the customary hassock,
 Kneel down remote upon the simple sod,
 And sue *in forma pauperis* to God.

As for the rest, intolerant to none,
Whatever shape the pious rite may bear,
Ev'n the poor Pagan's homage to the Sun
I would not harshly scorn, lest even there
I spurn'd some elements of Christian pray'r—
An aim, tho' erring, at a "world ayont"—
Acknowledgment of good—of man's futility,
A sense of need, and weakness, and indeed
That very thing so many Christians want—
Humility.

Such, unto Papists, Jews, or turban'd Turks,
Such is my spirit—(I don't mean my wealth!)
Such, may it please you, is my humble faith;
I know, full well, you do not like my *works*!
I have not sought, 'tis true, the Holy Land.
As full of texts as Cuddie Headrigg's mother,
The Bible in one hand,
And my own common-place-book in the other—
But you have been to Palestine—alas!
Some minds improve by travel, others, rather,
Resemble copper wire, or brass,
Which gets the narrower by going farther!
Worthless are all such Pilgrimages—very!
If Palmers at the Holy Tomb contrive
The human heats and rancour to revive
That at the Sepulchre they ought to bury,
A sorry sight it is to rest the eye on,
To see a Christian creature graze at Sion,

Then homeward, of the saintly pasture full,
 Rush bellowing, and breathing fire and smoke,
 At crippled Papistry to butt and poke,
 Exactly as a skittish Scottish bull
 Hunts an old woman in a scarlet cloak !

Why leave a serious, moral, pious home,
 Scotland, renown'd for sanctity of old,
 Far distant Catholics to rate and scold
 For—doing as the Romans do at Rome ?
 With such a bristling spirit wherefore quit
 The Land of Cakes for any land of wafers,
 About the graceless images to flit,
 And buzz and chafe importunate as chafers,
 Longing to carve the carvers to Scotch collops ?—
 People who hold such absolute opinions
 Should stay at home, in Protestant dominions,
 Not travel like male Mrs. Trollope.

Gifted with noble tendency to climb,
 Yet weak at the same time,
 Faith is a kind of parasitic plant,
 That grasps the nearest stem with tendril-rings ;
 And as the climate and the soil may grant,
 So is the sort of tree to which it clings.
 Consider then, before, like Harlothrumbo,
 You aim your club at any creed on earth,
 That, by the simple accident of birth,
 You might have been High Priest to Mumbo Jumbo.

For me—thro' heathen ignorance perchance,
 Not having knelt in Palestine,—I feel
 None of that griffinish excess of zeal,
 Some travellers would blaze with here in France.
 Dolls I can see in Virgin-like array,
 Nor for a scuffle with the idols hanker
 Like crazy Quixote at the puppet's play,
 If their "offence be rank," should mine be
 rancour?
 Mild light, and by degrees, should be the plan
 To cure the dark and eering mind;
 But who would rush at a benighted man,
 And give him two black eyes for being blind?

Suppose the tender but luxuriant hop
 Around a canker'd stem should twine,
 What Kentish beer would tear away the prop
 So roughly as to wound, nay, kill the bine?
 The images, 'tis true, are strangely dress'd,
 With gauds and toys extremely out of season;
 The carving nothing of the very best,
 The whole repugnant to the eye of reason,
 Shocking to taste, and to Fine Arts a treason—
 Yet ne'er o'erlook in bigotry of sect
 One truly *Catholic*, one common form,
 At which uncheck'd
 All Christian hearts may kindle or keep warm

Say, was it to my spirit's gain or loss,
 One bright and balmy morning, as I went
 From Liege's lovely environs to Ghent,
 If hard by the wayside I found a cross,
 That made me breathe a pray'r upon the spot—
 While Nature of herself, as if to trace
 The emblem's use, had trail'd around its base
 The blue significant Forget-me-not?
 Methought, the claims of Charity to urge
 More forcibly, along with Faith and Hope,
 The pious choice had pitch'd upon the verge
 Of a delicious slope,
 Giving the eye much variegated scope;—
 "Look round," it whisper'd, "on that prospect
 rare,
 Those vales so verdant, and those hills so blue;
 Enjoy the sunny world, so fresh, and fair,
 But"—(how the simple legend pierced me thro')
 "PRILZ POUR LES MALHEUREUX."

With sweet kind natures, as in honey'd cells,
 Religion lives, and feels herself at home;
 But only on a formal visit dwells
 Where wasps instead of bees have formed the
 comb.
 Shun pride, O Rae!—whatever sort beside
 You take in lieu, shun spiritual pride!

A pride there is of rank—a pride of birth,
 A pride of learning, and a pride of purse,
 A London pride—in short, there be on earth
 •A host of prides, some better and some worse;
 But of all prides, since Lucifer's attaint,
 The proudest swells a self-elected Saint.

To picture that cold pride so harsh and hard,
 Fancy a peacock in a poultry yard.
 Behold him in conceited circles sail,
 Strutting and dancing, and now planted stiff,
 In all his pomp of pageantry, as if
 He felt "the eyes of Europe" on his tail!
 As for the humble breed retain'd by man,
 He scorns the whole domestic clan—
 He bows, he bridges,
 He wheels, he sidles,
 At last, with stately dodgings in a corner
 He pens a simple russet hen, to scorn her
 Full in the blaze of his resplendent fan!
 "Look here," he cries (to give him words)
 "Thou feather'd clay—thou scum of birds!"
 Flirting the rustling plumage in her eyes,—
 "Look here, thou vile predestined sinner,
 Doom'd to be roasted for a dinner,
 Behold these lovely variegated dyes!
 These are the rainbow colours of the skies

That Heav'n has shed upon me *con amore*—
 A Bird of Paradise?—a pretty story!
I am that Saintly Fowl, thou paltry chick!
 Look at my crown of glory!
 Thou dingy, dirty, drabbled, draggled jill!"
 And off goes Partlet, wriggling from a kick,
 With bleeding scalp laid open by his bill!
 That little simile exactly paints
 How sinners are despised by saints.
 By saints!—the Hypocrites that ope heav'n's door
 Obsequious to the sinful man of riches—
 But put the wicked, naked, barelegg'd poor,
 In parish stocks instead of breeches.

The Saints!—the Bigots that in public spout,
 Spread phosphorus of zeal on scraps of fustian,
 And go like walking "Lucifers" about
 Mere living bundles of combustion.

The Saints!—the aping Fanatics that talk
 All cant and rant, and thapsodies highflown—
 That bid you bawl,
 A Sunday walk,
 And shun God's work as you should shun your own.

The Saints!—the Formalists, the extra pious,
 Who think the mortal husk can save the soul,
 By trundling with a mere mechanic bias,
 To church, just like a lignum-vitæ bowl!

The Saints!—the Pharisees, whose beadle stands
Beside a stern coercive kirk.

A piece of human mason-work,
Calling all sermons contrabands,
In that great Temple that's not made with hands.
Thrice blessed, rather, is the man, with whom
The gracious prodigality of nature,
The balm, the bliss, the beauty, and the bloom,
The bounteous providence in ev'ry feature,
Recall the good Creator to his creature,
Making all earth a fair, all heav'n its dome!
To *his* tuned spirit the wild heather-bells

Ring Sabbath knells;

The jubilate of the soaring lark
Is chant of clerk;

For choir, the thrush and the gregarious linnet;

The sod's a cushion for his pious want;

And, consecrated by the heav'n within it,

The sky-blue pool, a font.

Each cloud-capp'd mountain is a holy altar;

An organ breathes in every grove;

And the full heart's a Psalter,

Rich in deep hymns of gratitude and love!

Sufficiently by stern necessitarians

Poor Nature, with her face begrimed by dust,

Is stoked, coked, smoked, and almost choked; but must

Religion have its own Utilitarians,

Labell'd with evangelical phylacteries,
To make the road to heav'n a railway trust,
And churches—that's the naked fact—mere factories?

Oh! simply open wide the Temple door,
And let the solemn, swelling, organ greet,
 With *Voluntaries* meet,
The willing advent of the rich and poor!
And while to God the loud Hosannas soar,
With rich vibrations from the vocal throng—
From quiet shades that to the woods belong,
 And brooks with music of their own,
Voices may come to swell the choral song
With notes of praise they learned in musings lone.

How strange it is while on all vital questions,
That occupy the House and public mind,
We always meet with some humane suggestions
Of gentle measures of a healing kind,
Instead of harsh severity and vigour,
The Saint alone his preference retains
 For bill of penalties and pains,
And marks his narrow code with legal rigour!
Why shun, as worthless of affiliation,
What men of all political persuasion
Extol—and even use upon occasion—
That Christian principle, Conciliation?

But possibly the men who make such fuss
With Sunday pippins and old Tots infirm,
Attach some other meaning to the term,

•
As thus :

One market morning, in my usual rambles,
Passing along Whitechapel's ancient shambles,
Where meat was hung in many a joint and quarter,
I had to halt awhile, like other folks,
To let a killing butcher coax
A score of lambs and fatted sheep to slaughter.

A sturdy man he look'd to fell an ox,
Bull-fronted, ruddy, with a formal streak
Of well-greased hair down either cheek,
As if he dee-dash-dee'd some other flocks
Beside those woolly-headed stubborn blocks
That stood before him, in vexatious huddle—
Poor little lambs, with bleating wethers groun'd,
While, now and then, a thirsty creature stoop'd
And meekly snuff'd, but did not taste the puddle.

Fierce bark'd the dog, and many a blow was dealt,
That loin, and chump, and scrag and saddle felt,
Yet still, that fatal step they all declined it,—
And shunn'd the tainted door as if they smelt
Onions, mint sauce, and lemon juice behind it.

At last there came a pause of brutal force,
 The cur was silent, for his jaws were full
 Of tangled locks of tarry wool,
 The man had whoop'd and holloed till dead hoarse.
 The time was ripe for mild expostulation,
 And thus it stammer'd from a stander-by—
 “Zounds!—my good fellow,—it quite makes me—
 why,
 It really—my dear fellow—do just try
 Conciliation!”

Stringing his nerves like flint,
 The sturdy butcher seized upon the hint,—
 At least he seized upon the foremost wether,—
 And hugg'd and lugg'd and tugg'd him neck and crop
 Just *volens volens* thro' the open shop—
 If tails come off he didn't care a feather,—
 Then walking to the door and smiling grim,
 He rubb'd his forehead and his sleeve together—
 “'There!—I've *conciliated* him!”
 Again—good-humouredly to end our quarrel—
 (Good humour should prevail!)—
 I'll fit you with a tale,
 Whereto is tied a moral.

Once on a time a certain English lass
 Was seized with symptoms of such deep decline
 Cough, hectic flushes, ev'ry evil sign,

That, as their wont is at such desperate pass,
The Doctors gave her over—to an ass.
Accordingly, the grisly Shade to bilk,
Each morn the patient quaff'd a frothy bowl
Of aanine new milk,
Robbing a shaggy suckling of a foal
Which got proportionably spare and skinny—
Meanwhile the neighbours cried “Poor Mary Ann!
She can't get over it! she never can!”
When lo! to prove each prophet was a ninny,
The one that died was the poor wetnurse Jenny.

To aggravate the case,
There were but two grown donkeys in the
place;
And most unluckily for Eve's sick daughter,
The other long-ear'd creature was a male,
Who never in his life had given a pail
Of milk, or even chalk and water.
No matter: at the usual hour of eight
Down trots a donkey to the wicket-gate,
With Mister Simon Gubbins on its back,—
“Your sarvant, Miss,—a werry spring-like day,—
Bad time for hasses tho'! good lack! good lack!
Jenny be dead, Miss,—but I'ze brought ye Jack,
He doesn't give no milk—but he can bray.”

So runs the story.
And, in vain self-glory,

Some Saints would sneer at Gubbins for his blindness—
 But what the better are their pious saws
 To ailing souls than dry hee-haws,
 Without the milk of human kindness?

 STANZAS.

With the good of our country before us,
 Why play the mere partisan's game?
 Lo! the broad flag of England is o'er us,
 And behold on both sides 'as the same!

Not for this, not for that, not for any,
 Not for these, not for those, but for all,—
 To the last drop of blood—the last penny—
 Together let's stand, or let's fall!

Tear down the vile signs of a faction,
 Be the national banner unful'd,—
 And if we must have any faction,—
 Be it "Britain against all the world."

TO MY DAUGHTER.

ON HER BIRTH-DAY.

DEAR Fanny! nine long years ago,
While yet the morning sun was low,
And rosy with the Eastern glow
The landscape smiled—
Whilst lowed the newly-waken'd herds—
Sweet as the early song of birds,
I heard those first, delightful words,
“Thou hast a Child!”

Along with that uprising dew
Tears glisten'd in my eyes, though few,
To hail a dawning quite as new
To me, as Time:
It was not sorrow—not annoy—
But like a happy maid, though coy,
With grief-like welcome even joy
Foretells its prime.

So mayst thou live, dear! many years,
In all the bliss that life endears,
Not without smiles, nor yet from tears
Too strictly kept:
When first thy infant littleness
I folded in my fond caress,
The greatest proof of happiness
Was this—I wept.

SONG.

TO MY WIFE.

THOSE eyes that were so bright, love,

Have now a dimmer shine,—

But all they've lost in light, love,

Was what they gave to mine ;

But still those orbs reflect, love,

The beams of former hours,—

That ripen'd all my joys, my love

And tinted all my flowers !

Those locks were brown to see, love,

That now are turned so gray,—

But the years were spent with me, love,

That stole their hue away ;

Thy locks no longer share, love,

The golden glow of noon,—

But I've seen the world look fair, my love,

When silver'd by the moon !

That brow was smooth and fair, love,

That looks so shaded now,—

But for me it bore the care, love,

That spoiled a bonny brow.

And though no longer there, love,

The gloss it had of yore,—

Still Memory looks and dotes, my love,

Where Hope admired before !

YOUTH AND AGE.

IMPATIENT of his childhood,
 "Ah me!" exclaims young Arthur,
 Whilst roving in the wild wood,
 "I wish I were my father!"

Meanwhile, to see his Arthur
 So skip, and play, and run,
 "Ah me!" exclaims the father,
 "I wish I were my son!"

THE FLOWER.

ALONE, across a foreign plain,
 The Exile slowly wanders,
 And on his Isle beyond the main
 With sadden'd spirit ponders.

This lovely Isle beyond the sea,
 With all its household treasures;
 Its cottage homes, its merry birds,
 And all its rural pleasures.

Its leafy woods, its shady vales,
 Its moors, and purple heather;
 Its verdant fields bedeck'd with stars
 His childhood loved to gather.

When lo ! he starts, with glad surprise,
 Home-joys come rushing o'er him,
 For "modest, wee, and crimson-tipp'd,"
 He spies the flower before him !

With eager haste he stoops him down,
 His eyes with moisture hazy,
 And as he plucks the simple bloom,
 He murmurs, "Lawk-a-daisy !"

THE ELM TREE.

A DREAM IN THE WOODS.

'Twas in a shady Avenue,
 Where lofty Elms stood—
 And from a Tree
 There came to me
 A sad and solemn sound,
 That sometimes murmur'd overhead,
 And sometimes underground.
 Amongst the leaves it seem'd to sigh,
 Amid the boughs to moan ;
 It mutter'd in the stem, and then
 The roots took up the tone ;
 As if beneath the dewy grass
 The dead began to groan.

No breeze there was to stir the leaves,
No bolts that tempests launch,
To rend the trunk or rugged bark;
No gale to bend the branch;
No quake of earth to heave the roots,
That stood so stiff and staunch.

No bird was preening up aloft,
To rustle with its wing;
No squirrel, in its sport or fear,
From bough to bough to spring;
The solid bole
Had ne'er a hole
To hide a living thing!

No scooping hollow cell to lodge
A furtive beast or fowl,
The martin, bat,
Or forest cat
That nightly loves to prowl,
Nor ivy nook so apt to shroud
The moping, snoring owl.

But still the sound was in my ear,
A sad and solemn sound,
That sometimes murmur'd overhead,
And sometimes underground —
'Twas in a shady Avenue
Where lofty Elms abound.

O hath the Dryad still a tongue
In this ungenial clime ?
Have Sylvan Spirits still a voice
As in the classic prime—
To make the forest voluble,
As in the olden time ?

The olden time is dead and gone ;
Its years have fill'd their sum—
And e'en in Greece—her native Greece—
The Sylvan Nymph is dumb—
From ash, and beech, and aged oak,
No classic whispers come.

From Poplar, Pine, and drooping Birch,
And fragrant Linden Trees,
No living sound
E'er hovers round,
Unless the vagrant breeze,
The music of the merry bird,
Or hum of busy bees.

But busy bees forsake the Elm
That bears no bloom aloft—
The Finch was in the hawthorn-bush,
The Blackbird in the croft ;
And among the firs the brooding Dove,
That else might murmur soft.

Yet still I heard that solemn sound,
And sad it was to boot,
From every overhanging bough,
And each minuter shoot;
From rugged trunk and mossy rind,
And from the twisted root.

From these,—a melancholy moan;
From those,—a dreary sigh;
As if the boughs were wintry bare,
And wild winds sweeping by—
Whereas the smallest fleecy cloud
Was stedfast in the sky.

No sign or touch of stirring air
Could either sense observe—
The zephyr had not breath enough
The thistle-down to swerve
Or force the filmy gossamers
To take another curve.

In still and silent slumber hush'd
All Nature seem'd to be:
From heaven above, or earth beneath,
No whisper came to me—
Except the solemn sound and sad
From that MYSTERIOUS TREE!

A hollow, hollow, hollow sound,
As is that dreamy roar
When distant billows boil and bound
Along a shingly shore—
But the ocean brim was far aloof,
A hundred miles or more.

No murmur of the gusty sea,
No tumult of the beach,
However they may foam and fret,
The bounded sense could reach—
Methought the trees in mystic tongue
Were talking each to each!—

Mayhap, rehearsing ancient tales
Of greenwood love or guilt,
Of whisper'd vows
Beneath their boughs ;
Or blood obscurely spilt ;
Or of that near-hand Mansion House
A Royal Tudor built.

Perchance, of booty won or shared
Beneath the starry cope—
Or where the suicidal wretch
Hung up the fatal rope ;
Or Beauty kept an evil tryste,
Insnares by Love and Hope.

Of graves, perchance, untimely scoop'd
At midnight dark and dank—
And what is underneath the sod
Whereon the grass is rank—
Of old intrigues,
And privy leagues,
Tradition leaves in blank.

Of traitor lips that mutter'd plots—
Of Kin who fought and fell—
God knows the undiscover'd schemes,
The arts and acts of Hell,
Perform'd long generations since,
If trees had tongues to tell!

With wary eyes, and ears alert,
As one who walks afraid,
I wander'd down the dappled path
Of mingled light and shade—
How sweetly gleam'd that arch of blue
Beyond the green arcade!

How cheerly shone the glimpse of Heav'n
Beyond that verdant aisle!
All overarch'd with lofty elms,
That quench'd the light, the while,
As dim and chill
As serves to fill
Some old Cathedral pile!

And many a gnarled trunk was there,
That ages long had stood,
Till Time had wrought them into shapes
Like Pan's fantastic brood;
Or still more foul and hideous forms
That Pagans carve in wood!

A crouching Satyr lurking here—
And there a Goblin grim—
As staring full of demon life
As Gothic sculptor's whim—
A marvel it had scarcely been
To hear a voice from him!

Some whisper from that horrid mouth
Of strange, unearthly tone;
Or wild infernal laugh, to chill
One's marrow in the bone.
But no—it grins like rigid Death,
And silent as a stone!

As silent as its fellows be,
For all is mute with them—
The branch that climbs the leafy roof—
The rough and mossy stem—
The crooked root,
And tender shoot,
Where hangs the dewy gem.

One mystic Tree alone there is,
Of sad and solemn sound—
That sometimes murmurs overhead,
And sometimes underground—
In all that shady Avenue,
Where lofty Elms abound.

PART II.

THE Scene is changed! No green Arcade,
No Trees all ranged a-row—
But scatter'd like a beaten host,
Dispersing to and fro;
With here and there a sylvan corse,
That fell before the foe.

The Foe that down in yonder dell
Pursues his daily toil;
As witness many a prostrate trunk,
Bereft of leafy spoil,
Hard by its wooden stump, whereon
The adder loves to coil.

Alone he works—his ringing blows
Have banish'd bird and beast;
The Hind and Fawn have canter'd off
A hundred yards at least;
And on the maple's lofty top,
The linnet's song has ceased.

No eye his labour overlooks,
Or when he takes his rest ;
Except the timid thrush that peers
Above her secret nest,
Forbid by love to leave the young
Beneath her speckled breast.

The Woodman's heart is in his work,
His axe is sharp and good :
With sturdy arm and steady aim
He smites the gaping wood ;
From distant rocks
His lusty knocks
Re-echo many a rood.

His axe is keen, his arm is strong ;
The muscles serve him well ;
His years have reach'd an extra span,
The number none can tell ;
But still his lifelong task has been
The Timber Tree to fell.

Through Summer's parching sultriness,
And Winter's freezing cold,
From sapling youth
To virile growth,
And Age's rigid mould,
His energetic axe hath rung
Within that Forest old.

Aloft, upon his poising steel
 'The vivid sunbeams glance—
About his head and round his feet
 The forest shadows dance ;
And bounding from his russet coat
 The acorn drops askance.

His face is like a Druid's face,
 With wrinkles furrow'd deep,
And tann'd by scorching suns as brown
 As corn, that's ripe to reap ;
But the hair on brow, and cheek, and chin,
 Is white as wool of sheep.

His frame is like a giant's frame ;
 His legs are long and stark ;
His arms like limbs of knotted yew ;
 His hands like rugged bark ;
 So he felleth still
 With right good will,
As if to build an Ark !

Oh ! well within *His* fatal path
 The fearful Tree might quake
Through every fibre, twig, and leaf,
 With aspen tremor shake ;
 Through trunk and root,
 And branch and shoot,
A low complaining make !

Oh! well to *Him* the Tree might breathe
A sad and solemn sound,
A sigh that murmur'd overhead,
And groans from underground;
As in that shady Avenue
Where lofty Elms abound!

But calm and mute the Maple stands,
The Plane, the Ash, the Fir,
The Elm, the Beech, the drooping birch,
Without the least demur;
And e'en the Aspen's hoary leaf
Makes no unusual stir.

The Pines—those old gigantic Pines,
That writh—recalling soon
The famous Human Group that writhes
With Snakes in wild festoon—
In ramous wrestlings interlaced
A Forest Læocoon—

Like Titans of primeval girth
By tortures overcome,
Their brown enormous limbs they twine,
Bedew'd with tears of gum—
Fierce agonies that ought to yell,
But, like the marble, dumb.

Nay, yonder blasted Elm that stands
So like a man of sin,
Who, frantic, flings his arms abroad
To feel the Worm within—
For all that gesture, so intense,
It makes no sort of din !

An universal silence reigns
In rugged bark or peel,
Except that very trunk which rings
Beneath the biting steel—
Meanwhile the Woodman plies his axe
With unrelenting zeal !

No rustic song is on his tongue,
No whistle on his lips ;
But with a quiet thoughtfulness
His trusty tool he grips,
And, stroke on stroke, keeps hacking out
The bright and flying chips.

Stroke after stroke, with frequent dint
He spreads the fatal gash ;
Till, lo ! the remnant fibres rend,
With harsh and sudden crash,
And on the dull resounding turf
The jarring branches lash !

Oh! now the Forest Trees may sigh,
The Ash, the Poplar tall,
The Elm, the Beech, the drooping Birch,
The Aspens—one and all,
With solemn groan
And hollow moan
Lament a comrade's fall!

A goodly Elm, of noble girth,
That, thrice the human span—
While on their variegated course
The constant Seasons ran—
Through gale, and hail, and fiery bolt,
Had stood erect as Man.

But now, like mortal Man himself,
Struck down by hand of God,
Or heathen Idol tumbled prone
Beneath th' Eternal's nod,
In all its giant bulk and length
It lies along the sod!—

Ay, now the Forest Trees may grieve
And make a common moan
Around that patriarchal trunk
So newly overthrown;
And with a murmur recognise
A doom to be their own!

The Echo sleeps: the idle axe,
A disregarded tool,
Lies crushing with its passive weight
The toad's reputed stool—
The Woodman wipes his dewy brow
Within the shadows cool.

No Zephyr stirs: the ear may catch
The smallest insect-hum;
But on the disappointed sense
No mystic whispers come;
No tone of sylvan sympathy,
The Forest Trees are dumb.

No leafy noise, nor inward voice,
No sad and solemn sound,
That sometimes murmurs overhead,
And sometimes underground;
As in that shady Avenue,
Where lofty Elms abound!

PART III.

THE deed is done: the Tree is low
That stood so long and firm;
The Woodman and his axe are gone,
His toil has found its term;
And where he wrought the speckled Thrush
Securely hunts the worm.

The Cony from the sandy bank
Has run a rapid race,
Through thistle, bent, and tangled fern,
To seek the open space;
And on its haunches sits erect
To clean its furry face.

The dappled Fawn is close at hand,
The Hind is browsing near,—
And on the Larch's lowest bough
The Ousel whistles clear;
But checks the note
Within its throat,
As choked with sudden fear!

With sudden fear her wormy quest
The Thrush abruptly quits—
Through thistle, bent, and tangled fern
The startled Cony flits;
And on the Larch's lowest bough
No more the Ousel sits.

With sudden fear
The dappled Deer
Effect a swift escape;
But well might bolder creatures start,
And fly, or stand agape,
With rising hair, and curdled blood,
To see so grim a Shape!

The very sky turns pale above :
The earth grows dark beneath ;
The human Terror thrills with cold
And draws a shorter breath—
An universal panic owns
The dread approach of DEATH !

With silent pace, as shadows come,
And dark as shadows be,
The grisly Phantom takes his stand
Beside the fallen Tree,
And scans it with his gloomy eyes,
And laughs with horrid glee—

A dreary laugh and desolate,
Where mirth is void and null,
As hollow as its echo sounds
Within the hollow skull—
“Whoever laid this tree along,
His hatchet was not dull !

“The human arm and human tool
Have done their duty well !
But after sound of ringing axe
Must sound the ringing knell ;
When Elm or Oak
Have felt the stroke,
My turn it is to fell !

"No passive unregarded tree,
A senseless thing of wood,
Wherein the sluggish sap ascends
To swell the vernal bud—
But conscious, moving, breathing trunks
That throb with living blood!

"No forest Monarch yearly clad
In mantle green or brown;
That unrecorded lives, and falls
By hand of rustic clown—
But Kings who don the purple robe,
And wear the jewell'd crown.

"Ah! little recks the Royal mind,
Within his Banquet Hall,
While tapers shine and Music breathes
And Beauty leads the Ball,—
He little recks the oaken plank
Shall be his palace wall!

"Ah, little dreams the haughty Peer,
The while his Falcon flies—
Or on the blood-bedabbled turf
The antler'd quarry dies—
That in his own ancestral Park
The narrow dwelling lies!

“But haughty Peer and mighty King
 One doom shall overwhelm!
 The oaken cell
 Shall lodge him well
 Whose sceptre ruled a realm—
 While he, who never knew a home,
 Shall find it in the Elm!

“The tatter’d, lean, dejected wretch,
 Who begs from door to door,
 And dies within the cressy ditch,
 Or on the barren moor,
 The friendly Elm shall lodge and clothe
 That houseless man and poor!

“Yea, this recumbent rugged trunk,
 That lies so long and prone,
 With many a fallen acorn-cup,
 And mast, and firry cone—
 This rugged trunk shall hold its share
 Of mortal flesh and bone!

“A Miser hoarding heaps of gold,
 But pale with age-fears—
 A Wife lamenting love’s decay,
 With secret cruel tears,
 Distilling bitter, bitter drops
 From sweets of former years—

"A Man within whose gloomy mind
Offence had deeply sunk,
Who out of fierce Revenge's cup
Hath madly, darkly drunk—
Grief, Avarice, and Hate shall sleep
Within this very trunk !

"This massy trunk that lies along,
And many more must fall—
For the very knave
Who digs the grave,
The man who spreads the pall,
And he who tolls the funeral bell,
The Elm shall have them all !

"The tall abounding Elm that grows
In hedgerows up and down ;
In field and forest, copse and park,
And in the peopled town,
With colonies of noisy rooks
That nestle on its crown.

"And well th' abounding Elm may grow
In field and hedge so rife,
In forest, copse, and wooded park,
And 'mid the city's strife,
For, every hour that passes by
Shall end a human life !"

The Phantom ends : the shade is gone ;
The sky is clear and bright ;
On turf, and moss, and fallen Tree,
There glows a ruddy light ;
And bounding through the golden fern
The Rabbit comes to bite.

The Thrush's mate beside her sits
And pipes a merry lay ;
The Dove is in the evergreens ;
And on the Larch's spray
The Fly-bird flutters up and down,
To catch its tiny prey.

The gentle Hind and dappled Fawn
Are coming up the glade ;
Each harmless furr'd and feather'd thing
Is glad, and not afraid—
But on my sadden'd spirit still
The Shadow leaves a shade.

A secret, vague, prophetic gloom,
As though by certain mark
I knew the fore-appointed Tree,
Within whose rugged bark
This warm and living frame shall find
Its narrow house and dark.

That mystic Tree which breathed to me
 A sad and solemn sound,
 That sometimes murmur'd overhead,
 And sometimes underground;
 Within that shady Avenue
 Where lofty Elms abound.

 THE MARY.

A SEA-SIDE SKETCH.

Lov'EST thou not, Alice, with the early tide
 To see the hardy Fisher hoist his mast,
 And stretch his sail towards the ocean wide,—
 Like God's own beadsman going forth to cast
 His net into the deep, which doth provide
 Enormous bounties, hidden in its vast
 Bosom like Charity's, for all who seek
 And take its gracious boon thankful and meek?

The sea is bright with morning,—but the dark
 Seems still to linger on his broad black sail,
 For it is early hoisted, like a mark
 For the low sun to shoot at with his pale
 And level beams: All round the shadowy bark
 The green wave glimmers, and the gentle gale
 Swells in her canvas, till the waters show
 The keel's newspeed, and whiten at the bow.

Then look abaft—(for thou canst understand
That phrase)—and there he sitteth at the stern,
Grasping the tiller in his broad brown hand,
The hardy Fisherman. Thou may'st discern
Ten fathoms off the wrinkles in the tann'd
And honest countenance that he will turn
To look upon us, with a quiet gaze—
As we are passing on our several ways.

So, some ten days ago, on such a morn.
The Mary, like a seamew, sought her spoil
Amongst the finny race: 'twas when the corn
Woo'd the sharp sickle, and the golden toil
Summon'd all rustic hands to fill the horn
Of Ceres to the brim, that brave turmoil
Was at the prime, and Woodgate went to reap
His harvest too, upon the broad blue deep.

His mast was up, his anchor heaved aboard,
His mainsail stretching in the first gray gleams
Of morning, for the wind. Ben's eye was stored
With fishes—fishes swam in all his dreams,
And all the goodly east seem'd but a hoard
Of silvery fishes, that in shoals and streams
Groped into the deep dusk that fill'd the sky,
For him to catch in meshes of his eye.

For Ben had the true sailor's sanguine heart,
And saw the future with a boy's brave thought,
No doubts, nor faint misgivings had a part
In his bright visions—ay, before he caught
His fish, he sold them in the scaly mart,
And summ'd the net proceeds. This should have
brought

Despair upon him when his hopes were foil'd,
But though one crop was marr'd, again he toil'd

And sow'd his seed afresh.—Many foul blights
Perish'd his hardwon gains—yet he had plann'd
No schemes of too extravagant delights—
No goodly houses on the Goodwin sand—
But a small humble home, and loving nights,
Such as his honest heart and earnest hand
Might fairly purchase. Were these hopes too airy?
Such as they were, they rested on thee, Mary.

She was the prize of many a toilsome year,
And hardwon wages, on the perilous sea—
Of savings ever since the shipboy's tear
Was shed for home, that lay beyond the lee ;—
She was purveyor for his other dear
Mary, and for the infant yet to be
Fruit of their married loves. These made him dote
Upon the homely beauties of his boat,

Whose pitch black hull roll'd darkly on the wave,
No gayer than one single stripe of blue
Could make her swarthy sides. She seem'd a slave,
A negro among boats—that only knew
Hardship and rugged toil—no pennons brave
Flaunted upon the mast—but oft a few
Dark dripping jackets flutter'd to the air,
Ensigns of hardihood and toilsome care.

And when she ventured for the deep, she spread
A tawny sail against the sunbright sky,
Dark as a cloud that journeys overhead—
But then those tawny wings were stretch'd to fly
Across the wide sea desert for the bread
Of babes and mothers—many an anxious eye
Dwelt on her course, and many a fervent pray'r
Invoked the heavens to protect and spare.

Where is she now? The secrets of the deep
Are dark and hidden from the human ken;
Only the sea-bird saw the surges sweep
Over the bark of the devoted Ben,—
Meanwhile a widow sobs and orphans weep,
And sighs are heard from weatherbeaten men,
Dark sunburnt men, uncouth and rude and hairy,
While loungers idly ask, "Where is the Mary?"

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THE SEASON.

SUMMER's gone and over !
Fogs are falling down ;
And with russet tinges
Autumn's doing brown.

Boughs are daily rifled
By the gusty thieves,
And the Book of Nature
Getteth short of leaves.

Round the tops of houses,
Swallows, as they fit,
Give, like yearly tenants,
Notices to quit.

Skies, of fickle temper,
Weep by turns, and laugh—
Night and Day together
Taking half-and-half.

So September endeth—
Cold, and most perverse—
But the Month that follows,
Sure will pinch us worse.

THE LAY OF THE LABOURER.

A spade! a rake! a hoe!
 A pickaxe, or a bill!
 A hook to reap, or a scythe to mow,
 A flail, or what ye will—
 And hetch a teasy hand
 To ply the needful tool,
 And skell'd enough, by ye sons tough,
 In labour's rugged school.

To hedge or dig the ditch
 To lop or kilt the tree,
 To lay the swane or cut the almy tree,
 Or plunge the scythe in sea,
 The harrow stack to bind,
 The wheaten rick to flatch,
 And never fat in my pouch to find
 The tinder or the match.

To a flaming barn or farm
 My fancies never roam,
 The fire I yearn to kindle and burn
 Is on the hearth of Home:
 Where children huddle and crouch
 Through dark long wintry days,
 Where starving children huddle and crouch,
 To see the cheetful ray.

A-glowing on the haggard cheek,
And not in the haggard's blaze!

To Him who sends a drought
To parch the fields forlorn,
The rain to flood the meadows with mud,
The blight to blast the corn,
To Him I leave to guide
The bolt in its crooked path,
To strike the miser's rick, and show
The skies blood red with wrath.

A spade! a rake! a hoe!
A pickaxe, or a bill!
A hook to reap, or a scythe to mow,
A flail, or what ye will--
The corn to thrash, or the hedge to plash,
The market-earn to drive,
Or mend the fence by the cover side,
And leave the game alive.

Ay, only give me work,
And then you need not fear
That I shall snare his Worship's hare,
Or kill his Grace's deer;
Break into his lordship's house,
To steal the plate so rich;
Or leave the yeoman that had a purse
To velter in a ditch.

Wherever Nature needs,
Wherever Labour calls,
No job I'll shrink of the hardest work,
To shun the workhouse walls;
Where savage laws begrudge
The pauper babe its breath,
And doom a wife to a widow's life,
Before her partner's death.

My only claim is this,
With labour stiff and stark,
By lawful turn, my living to earn,
Between the light and dark;
My daily bread, and nightly bed,
My bacon, and drop of beer—
But all from the hand that holds the land,
And none from the overseer!

No parish money, or loaf,
No pauper badges for me,
A son of the soil, by right of toil
Entitled to my fee.
No alms I ask, give me my task.
Here are the arm, the leg,
The strength, the sinews of a Man,
To work, and not to beg.

Still one of Adam's heirs,
Though doom'd by chance of birth
To dress so mean, and to eat the lean
Instead of the fat of the earth;
To make such humble meals
As honest labour can,
A bone and a crust, with a grace to God,
And little thanks to man!

A spade! a rake! a hoe!
A pickaxe, or a bill!
A hook to reap, or a scythe to mow,
A flail, or what ye will--
Whatever the tool to ply,
Here is a willing drudge,
With muscle and limb, and woe to him
Who does their pay begrudge!

Who every weekly score
Docks labour's little mite,
Bestows on the poor at the temple door,
But robb'd them over night,
The very shilling he hoped to save,
As health and morals fail,
Shall visit me in the New Bastille,
The Spital, or the Gaol!

THE SONG OF THE SHIRT.

Worn fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the "song of the Shirt."

"Work! work! work!
While the cock is crowing aloof!
And work—work—work!
Till the stars shine through the roof!
It's Oh! to be a slave
Along with the barbarous Turk,
Where woman has never a soul to save,
If this is Christian work!"

"Work—work—work
Till the brain begins to swim;
Work—work—work
Till the eyes are heavy and dim!
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
And sew them on in a dream!"

"Oh, Men, with Sisters dear!
Oh, Men, with Mothers and Wives!
It is not linen you're wearing out,
But human creatures' lives!
Stitch—stitch—stitch,
In poverty, hunger and dirt,
Sewing at once, with a double thread,
A Shroud as well as a Shirt.

"But why do I talk of Death?
That Phantom of grisly bone,
I hardly fear his terrible shape,
It seems so like my own—
It seems so like my own,
Because of the facts I keep:
Oh, God! that bread should be so dear,
And flesh and blood so cheap!

"Work—work—work!
My labour never flags;
And what are its wages? A bed of straw,
A crust of bread—and rags.
That shutter'd roof—and this naked floor—
A table—a broken chair—
And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank
For sometimes falling there!

"Work—work—work!

From weary chime to chime,

Work—work—work—

As prisoners work for crime!

Band, and gusset, and seam,

Seam, and gusset, and band,

Till the heart is sick, and the brain benumb'd,

As well as the weary hand.

"Work—work—work,

In the dull December light,

And work—work—work,

When the weather is warm and bright—

While underneath the eaves

The brooding swallows cling

As if to show me their sunny backs

And twit me with the spring.

"Oh! but to breathe the breath

Of the cowslip and primrose sweet—

With the sky above my head,

And the grass beneath my feet,

For only one short hour

To feel as I used to feel,

Before I knew the woes of want

And the walk that costs a meal!

"Oh! but for one short hour!
 A respite however brief!
 No blessed leisure for Love or Hope,
 But only time for Grief!
 A little weeping would ease my heart,
 But in their busy bed
 My tears must stop, for every drop
 Hinders needle and thread!"

With fingers weary and worn,
 With eyelids heavy and red,
 A woman sat in a womanly room,
 Plying her needle and thread —
 Stitched she could catch it
 In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
 And still with a voice of delicious pitch,—
 Would that it could reach the Rich' —
 She sang this "Song of the Shirt!"

THE LADY'S DREAM.

The lady lay in her bed,
 Her couch so warm and soft,
 But her sleep was restless and broken still;
 For turning often and oft
 From side to side, she murther'd and moan'd,
 And toss'd her arms aloft.

At last she startled up,
And gazed on the vacant air,
With a look of awe, as if she saw
Some dreadful phantom there—
And then in the pillow she buried her face
From visions ill to bear.

The very curtain shook.
Her terror was so extreme;
And the light that fell on the broader'd quilt
Kept a tremulous gleam;
And her voice was hollow, and shook as she cried:—
“Oh me! that awful dream!”

“That weary, weary walk,
In the churchyard's dismal ground!
And those horrible things, with shadily wings,
That came and flitted round, —
Death, death, and nothing but death,
In every sight and sound.”

“And oh! those maidens young,
Who wrought in that dreary room,
With figures drooping and spectres thin,
And cheeks without a bloom;
And the Voice that cried, ‘For the pomp of pride,
We haste to an early tomb!’

“For the pomp and pleasure of Pride,
We toil like Afric slaves,
And only to earn a home at last,
Where yonder cypress waves;—
And then they pointed—I never saw
A ground so full of graves!

“And still the coffins came,
With their sorrowful trains and slow;
Coffin after coffin still,
A sad and sickening show;
From grief exempt, I never had dreamt
Of such a World of Woe!

“Of the hearts that daily break,
Of the tears that hourly fall,
Of the many, many troubles of life,
That grieve this earthly ball—
Disease and Hunger, and Pain, and Want,
But now I dreamt of them all!

“For the blind and the cripple were there,
And the babe that pined for bread,
And the houseless man, and the widow poor
Who begged—to bury the dead;
The naked, alas, that I might have clad,
The famish’d I might have fed!

THE LADY'S DREAM.

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"The sorrow I might have sooth'd,
And the unregarded tears;
For many a thronging shape was there,
From long forgotten years,
Ay, even the poor rejected Moon,
Who raised my childish fears!

"Each pleading look, that long ago
I scann'd with a heedless eye,
Each face was gazing as I lainly there,
As when I pass'd it by:
Woe, woe for me if the past should be
Thus present when I die!

"No need of sulphurous lake,
No need of fiery coal,
But only that crowd of human kind
Who wanted pity and dole—
In everlasting retrospect—
Will wring my sinful soul!

"Alas! I have walk'd through life
Too heedless where I trod;
Nay, helping to trample my fellow worm,
And fill the burial sod—
Forgetting that even the sparrow falls
Not unmark'd of God!

"I drank the richest draughts;
And ate whatever is good—
Fish, and flesh, and fowl, and fruit,
Supplied my hungry mood;
But I never remember'd the wretched ones
That starve for want of food!"

"I dress'd as the noble dress,
In cloth of silver and gold,
With silk, and satin, and costly furs,
In many an ample fold,
But I never remember'd the naked limb
That froze with winter's cold.

"The wounds I might have heard of
The human sorrow and sad fate
And yet it never was in my soul
To play so ill a part—
But evil is wrought by want of Thought,
As well as want of Heart!"

She clasp'd her fervent hands,
And the tears began to stream;
Large, and bitter, and fast they fell,
Remorse was so extreme:
And yet, oh yet, that many a Dame
Would dream the Lady's Dream!

SONNET.

THINK, sweetest, if my lids are not now wet,
 The tenderest tears lie ready at the brim,
 To see thine own dear eyes — so pale and dim, —
 Touching my soul with full and fond regret,
 For on thy ease my heart's whole care is set;
 Seeing I love thee in no passionate whim,
 Whose summer date chat with the rose's trim,
 Which one hot June can parch and forget, —
 Ah, no! I chose thee for affection's pet,
 For unworn love, and constant cheer and light —
 To smile but to thy smile — or else to fret
 When thou art metest — rather than to sing
 Elsewhere. Alas! I ought to soothe and kiss
 Thy dear pale cheek while I assure thee this!

A PARTHIAN GLANCE.

COME, my Crony, let's think upon far-away days,
 And lift up a little Oblivion's veil —
 Let's consider the past with a lingering gaze,
 Like a peacock whose eyes are inclined to his tail.

Ay, come, let us turn our attention behind,
Like those critics whose heads are so heavy, I fear,
That they cannot keep up with the march of the mind,
And so turn face about for reviewing the rear.

Looking over Time's crupper and over his tail,
Oh, what ages and pages there are to revise!
And as farther our back-searching glances prevail,
Like the emmet, "how little we are in our eyes!"

What a sweet pretty innocent, half-a-yard long,
On a dimity lap of true pursere make!
I can fancy I hear the old lullaby song
That was meant to compose me, but kept me awake.

Methinks I still suffer the infantine throes,
When my flesh was a cushion for my long pin—
Whilst they patted my body to comfort my woes,
Oh! how little they dream: they were driving them in!

Infant sorrows are strong—infant pleasures as weak—
But no grief was allow'd to indulge in its note;
Did you ever attempt a small "bubble and squeak,"
Through the Dalby's Carminative down in your
throat?

Did you ever go up to the roof with a bounce?
Did you ever come down to the floor with the same?
Oh! I can't but agree with both ends, and pronounce
"Heads or tails," with a child, an unpleasantish game!

Then an urchin—I see myself urchin indeed—

With a smooth Sunday face for a mother's delight ;

Why should weeks have an end ?—I am sure there was
need

Of a Sabbath, to follow each Saturday-night.

Was your face ever sent to the housemaid to scrub ?

Have you ever felt luck back soften'd with sand ?

Had you ever your nose towell'd up to a snub,

And your eyes knuckled out with the back of the hand ?

Then a school-boy - my tailor was nothing in fault,

For an urchin will grow to a lad by degrees,—

But how well I remember that "paper-an'-all"

That was down to the elbows, and up to the knees !

What a figure it cut when as Norval I spoke !

With a lanky right leg duly planted before ;

Whilst I told of the chief that was kill'd by my stroke,

And extended *my* arms as "the arms that he wore !"

Next a Lover—Oh ! say, were you ever in love !

With a lady too cold—and your bosom too hot ?

Have you bow'd to a shoe-tie, and knelt to a glove,

Like a *beau* that desired to be tied in a knot ?

With the Bride all in white, and your body in blue,

Did you walk up the aisle— the genteelst of men ?

When I think of that beautiful vision anew,

Oh ! I seem but the *biffin* of what I was then !

I am wither'd and worn by a premature care,
 And wrinkles confess the decline of my days;
 Old Time's busy hand has made free with my hair,
 And I'm seeking to hide it—by writing for bays!

 A TOAST.

Come! a health! and it's not to be slighted with sips,
 A cold pulse, or a spirit so pure—
 All the blood in my head seems to rush to my lips,
 To commingle its flow with the wine.

Bring a cup of the purest and coldest water,—
 But a little antique in its shape;
 And the juice,—let it be the most rare and rare,
 All the bloom, with the age, of the grape!

Even such is the love I would celebrate now,
 At once young, and mature, and in prime,—
 Like the tree of the orange, that shows on its bough
 The bud, blossom and fruit at one time!

Then with three, as is due, let the honours be paid,
 Whilst I give with my hand, heart, and head,
 "Here's to her, the fond mother, dear partner, kind maid,
 Who first taught me to love, woo, and wed!"

THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

A ROMANCE.

PART I.

Some dreams we have are nothing else but dreams,
Unnatural, and full of contradictions ;
Yet others of our most romantic schemes
Are something more than fictions.

It might be only on enchanted ground ;
It might be merely by a thought's expansion ;
But, in the spirit or the flesh, I found
An old deserted Mansion.

A residence for woman, child, and man,
A dwelling place,—and yet no habitation ;
A House,—but under some prodigious ban
Of Excommunication.

Unhinged the iron gates half open hung,
Jar'd by the gusty gales of many winters,
That from its crumbled pedestal had flung
One marble globe in splinters

No dog was at the threshold, great or small :
No pigeon on the roof—no household creature—
No cat demurely dozing on the wall—
Not one domestic feature.

No human figure stirr'd, to go or come,
No face look'd forth from shut or open casement;
No chimney smoked—there was no sign of Home
From parapet to basement.

With slatter'd panes the grassy court was starr'd;
The time-worn coping-stone had tumbled after!
And thro' the ragged roof the sky shone, barr'd
With naked beam and rafter.

O'er all there hung a shadow and a fear;
A sense of mystery the spirit haunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted!

The flow'rs grew wild and rankly on the weed,
Roses with thistles struggled for a space,
And vagrant plants of parasitic breed
Had overgrown the bed.

But gay or phony, steadfast or infirm,
No heart was there to heed the hour's duration;
All times and tides were lost in one long term
Of stagnant desolation.

The wren had built within the Porch, she found
Its quiet loneliness so sure and thorough;
And on the lawn,—within its turfy mound,—
The rabbit made his burrow.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

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The rabbit wild and gray, that flitted thro'
The shrubby clumps, and frisk'd, and sat, and vanished
But leisurely and bold, as if he knew
His enemy was banish'd.

The wary crow,—the pheasant from the woods—
Lull'd by the still and ever ringing sameness,
Close to the mansion, like domestic broods,
Fed with a "shocking tameness."

The coot was swimming in the reedy pond,
Beside the water-hen, so soon alighted;
And in the weedy moat the heron, fond
Of solitude, aligh

The moping heron motionless and still,
That on a stone, as silently and stilly,
Stood, an apparent sentinel, as if
To guard the water-lily.

No sound was heard except, from far away,
The ringing of the witwall's shrilly laughter,
Or, now and then, the chatter of the jay,
That Echo murmur'd after.

But Echo never mock'd the human tongue;
Some weighty crime, that Heaven could not pardon,
A secret curse on that old Building hung
And its deserted Garden.

The beds were all untouch'd by hand or tool ;
No footstep marked the damp and mossy gravel,
Each walk as green as is the mantled pool,
For want of human travel.

The vine unpruned, and the neglected peach,
Droop'd from the wall with which they used to grapple;
And on the lanker'd tree, in easy reach,
Rotted the golden apple.

But awfully the truant shunn'd the ground,
The vagrant kept aloof, and daring Teacher,
In spite of gaps that thro' the fences round
Invited the encroacher.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted !

The pear and quince lay squander'd on the grass ;
The mould was purple with unheeded showers
Of bloomy plums—a Wilderness it was
Of fruits, and weeds, and flowers !

The marigold amidst the nettles blew,
The gourd embraced the rose bush in its ramble,
The thistle and the stock together grew,
The holly-hock and bramble.

The bear-bine with the lilac interlaced,
The sturdy bur-dock choked its slender neighbour,
The spicy pink. All tokens were effaced
Of human care and labour.

The very yew Formality had train'd
To such a rigid pyramidal stature,
For want of trimming had almost regain'd
The raggedness of nature.

The Fountain was a-dry — neglect and time
Had marr'd the work of artisan and mason,
And efts and croaking frogs, begot of slane,
Sprawl'd in the ruin'd basin.

The Statue, fallen from its marble base,
Amidst the refuse leaves, and herbage rotten,
Lay like the Idol of some by-gone race,
Its name and rites forgotten,

On ev'ry side the aspect was the same,
All ruin'd, desolate, forlorn and savage :
No hand or foot within the precinct came
To rectify or ravage.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted !

PART II.

O, Very gloomy is the House of Woe,
Where tears are falling while the L. II is kneeling,
With all the dark solemnities which show
That Death is in the dwelling.

O very, very dreary is the room
Where Love, domestic Love, no longer nestles,
But, smitten by the common stroke of doom,
The Corpse lies on the nestled.

But House of Woe, and hearse, and burial pit,
The narrow home of the departed mortal
Ne'er look'd so gloomy as that Christy Hall,
With its deserted portal.

The centipede along the threshold crept,
The cobweb hung across in mazy tangle,
And in its winding sheet the maggot slept,
At every nook and angle.

The keyhole lodged the crowwig and her brood,
The emmets of the steps had old possession,
And marched in search of their diurnal food
In undisturbed procession.

As undisturb'd as the prehensile cell
Of moth or maggot, or the spider's tissue,
For never foot upon that threshold fell,
To enter or to issue.

O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted!

Howbeit, the door I push'd—on so I dream'd—
Which slowly, slowly gap'd—& the hinges creaking
With such a rusty eloquence, it seemed
That Time himself was speaking.

But Time was dumb within that Mansion old,
Or left his tale to the heraldic banners,
That hung from the corroded walls, and told
Of former men and manners—

Those tatter'd flags, that with the open'd door,
Seem'd the old wave of battle to remember,
While fallen fragments danced upon the floor,
Like dead leaves in December.

The startled bats flew out.—bird after bird,
The screech-owl overhead began to flutter,
And seemed to mock the cry that she had heard
Some dying victim utter!

A shriek that echo'd from the joisted roof,
And up the stair, and further still and further,
Till in some ringing chamber far aloof
It ceased its tale of murder !

Meanwhile the rusty armour rattled round,
The banner shudder'd, and the ragged streamer ;
All things the horrid tenor of the sound
Acknowledged with a tremor.

The antlers, where the helmet hung, and belt,
Stirr'd as the tempest stirs the forest branches,
Or as the stag had trembled when he felt
The blood-hound at his hamels.

The window jingled in its crumbled frame,
And thro' its many gaps of desolation
Dolorous moans and hollow sighs came,
Like those of dissolution.

The wood-louse dropped, and rolled into a ball.
Touch'd by some impulse occult or mechanic ;
And nameless beetles ran along the wall
In universal panic.

The subtle spider, that from overhead
Hung like a spy on human guilt and error,
Suddenly turn'd and up its slender thread
Ran with a nimble terror.

The very stains and fractures on the wall
Assuming features solemn and terrific,
Hinted some Tragedy of that old Hall,
Lock'd up in hieroglyphic.

Some tale that might, perchance, have solved the doubt,
Wherefore amongst those flags so dull and livid,
The banner of the BLOODY HAND shone out
So ominously vivid.

Some key to that inscrutable appeal,
Which made the very frame of Nature quiver;
And every thrilling nerve and fibre feel
So ague-like a shiver.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted;
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted!

If but a rat had linger'd in the house,
To lure the thought into a social channel!
But not a rat remain'd, or tiny mouse,
To squeak behind the panel.

Huge drops roll'd down the walls, as if they wept;
And where the cricket used to chirp so snilly,
The toad was squatting, and the lizard crept
On that damp hearth and chilly.

For years no cheerful blaze had sparkled there,
Or glanced on coat of buff or knightly metal;
The slug was crawling on the vacant chair,—
The snail upon the settle.

The floor was redolent of mould and must,
The fungus in the rotten seams had quicken'd;
While on the eaken table coats of dust
Perennially had thickened.

No mark of leathern jack or metal can,
No cup—no horn—no hospitable token,—
All social ties between our board and Man
Had long ago been broken.

There was so full a vapour in the air,
The shadow of a presence so drearous;
No human creature could have feasted there,
Even the most ferocious.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of inveterate spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
'The place is Haunted!'

PART III.

'Tis hard for human actions to account,
Whether from reason or from impulse only —
But some internal prompting bade me mount
The gloomy stairs and lobby.

Those gloomy stairs, so dark, and damp and cold,
With odours as from bones and relics earned,
Deprived of rice, and consecrated mould,
The chapel vault or charnel.

Those dreary stairs, where with the sounding stress
Of ev'ry step, so many echoes blended,
The mind, with dark misgivings, feared to guess
How many feet ascended.

The tempest with its spoils had drifted in,
Till each unwholesome stone was darkly spotted,
As thickly as the leopard's dappled skin,
With leaves that rankly rotted.

The air was thick—and in the upper room
The bat—or something in its shape—was winging
And on the wall, as chilly as a tomb,
The Death's-Head moth was clinging.

That mystic moth, which, with a sense profound
Of all unholy presence, augurs truly ;
And with a grim significance flits round
The taper burning blackly.

Such omens in the place there seem'd to be,
At ev'ry crooked turn, or on the landing,
The straining eyeball was prepared to see
Some Apparition standing.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit domineered,
And said as plain as whisper in the ear
The place is Haunted.

Yet no portentous Shape the sight amazed :
Each object plain, and tangible, and valid :
But from their tarnish'd frames dark Figures gazed,
And Faces spectre-palid.

Not merely with the mimic life that lies
Within the compass of Art's simulation ;
Their souls were looking thro' their painted eyes
With awful speculation.

On ev'ry lip a speechless horror dwelt ;
On ev'ry brow the burthen of affliction ;
The old Ancestral spirits knew and felt
The House's malediction.

Such earnest woe their features overcast,
They might have stirr'd, or sigh'd, or wept, or spoken;
But, save the hollow moaning of the blast,
The stillness was unbroken.

No other sound or stir of life was there,
Except my steps in solitary clamber,
From flight to flight, from humid stair to stair,
From chamber into chamber.

Deserted rooms of luxury and state,
That old magnificence had richly furnish'd
With pictures, cabinets of ancient date
And carvings gilt and burnish'd.

Rich hangings, storied by the needle's art
With scripture history, or classic fable;
But all had faded, save one ragged part,
Where Cain was slaying Abel.

The silent waste of mildew and the moth
Had marr'd the tissue with a partial ravage;
But undecaying frown'd upon the cloth
Each feature stern and savage.

The sky was pale; the cloud a thing of doubt;
Some hues were fresh, and some decay'd and duller
But still the BLOODY FLAME shone strangely out
With vehemence of colour!

The BLOODY HAND that with a lurid stain
Shone on the dusty floor, a dismal token,
Projected from the casement's painted pane,
Where all beside was broken.

The BLOODY HAND significant of crime,
That glaring on the old herodike banner,
Had kept its crimson unimpaired by time,
In such a wondrous manner

O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit doated,
And said as plain as whisper to the ear,
The place is Haunted!

The Death Watch tick'd behind the panel'd oak,
Inexplicable ruminations took the air,
And echoes strange and my flesh awoke,
The fancy to embarrass

Prophetic hints that fill'd the soul with dread,
But thro' one gloomy entrance pointing mostly,
The while some secret inspiration said,
That Chamber is the Ghostly!

Across the door no pos am a festoon
Swing pendulous -- no web -- no dusty fringes,
No silken chrysalis or white cocoon
About its nooks and hinges.

The spider shunn'd the interdicted room,
The moth, the beetle, and the fly were banish'd,
And where the sunbeam fell athwart the gloom
The very midge had vanish'd.

One lonely ray that glanced upon a Bed,
As if with awful aim direct and certain,
To show the BLOODY HAND in burning red
Embroidered on the curt in.

And yet no gory stain was on the quilt—
The pillow in its place had slowly totted;
The floor alone retain'd the trace of guilt,
Those boards obscurely spotted.

Obscurely spotted to the door, and thence
With many doubles to the grated casement—
Oh what a tale they told of fear intense,
Of horror and amazement!

What human creature in the dead of night
Had coursed like hunted hare that cruel distance?
Had sought the door, the window in his flight,
Striving for dear existence?

What shrieking Spirit in that bloody room
Its mortal frame had violently quitted?—
Across the sunbeam, with a sudden gloom,
A ghostly Shadow flitted.

Across the sunbeam, and along the wall,
But painted on the air so very dimly,
It hardly veil'd the tapestry at all,
Or portrait frowning grimly

O'er all these hung the shadow of a fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And sad, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted !

SONNET.

My heart is sick with longing, tho' I feed
On hope; Time goes with such a heavy pace
That neither brings nor takes from thy embrace,
As if he slept - forgetting his old speed :
For, as in sunshine only we can read
The march of minutes on the dial's face,
So in the shadows of this lonely place
There is no love, and Time is dead indeed.
But when, dear lady, I am near thy heart,
Thy smile is time, and then so swift it flies,
It seems we only meet to tear apart,
With aching hands and lingering of eyes.
Alas, alas ! that we must learn hours' flight
By the same light of love that makes them bright !

THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS.

ONE more Unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death!

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Look at her garments
Clinging like cerements;
Whilst the wave constantly
Drips from her clothing;
Take her up instantly,
Loving, not loathing.—

Touch her not scornfully;
Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly;
Not of the stains of her,
All that remains of her
Now is pure womanly.

Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny
Rash and undutiful;
Past all dishonour,
Death has left on her
Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers,
One of Eve's family—
Wipe those poor lips of hers
Oozing so clammy.

Loop up her tresses
Escaped from the comb,
Her fair auburn tresses;
Whilst wonderment guesses
Where was her home?

Who was her father?
Who was her mother?
Had she a sister?
Had she a brother?
Or was there a dearer one
Still, and a nearer one
Yet, than all other?

Alas! for the rarity
Of Christian charity

THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS.

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Under the sun!
Oh! it was pitiful!
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none.

Sisterly, brotherly,
Fatherly, motherly,
Feelings had changed:
Love, by harsh evidence,
Thrown from its eminence;
Even God's providence
Seeming estranged.

Where the lamps quiver
So far in the river,
With many a light
From window and casement,
From garret to basement,
She stood, with amazement,
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver;
But not the dark arch,
Or the black flowing river:
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurl'd—

Any where, any where
Out of the world !

In she plunged boldly,
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran,—
Over the brink of it,
Picture it—think of it,
Dissolute Man !
Lave in it, drink of it,
Then, if you can !

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care ;
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair !

Ere her limbs frigidly
Stiffen too rigidly,
Decently,—kindly —
Smoothie, and compose them ;
And her eyes, close them
Staring so blindly !

Dreadfully staring
'Tho' muddy impurity,
As when with the daring
Last look of despairing
Fix'd on futurity.

Perishing gloomily,
Spur'd by contumely,
Cold inhumanity,
Burning insanity,
Into her rest,—
Cross her hands humbly,
As if praying dumbly,
Over her breast!

Owning her weakness,
Her evil behaviour,
And leaving, with meekness,
Her sins to her Saviour!

A STORM AT HASTINGS,

AND THE LITTLE UNKNOWN.

'Twas August—Hastings every day was filling—
Hastings, that “greenest spot on memory’s waste!”
With crowds of idlers willing or unwilling
To be bedipped—be noticed—or be braced,
And all things rose a penny in a shilling,
Meanwhile, from window and from door, in haste
“Accommodation bills” kept coming down,
Gladding “the world of letters” in that town.

Each day pour'd in new coach-fulls of new cits,
Flying from London smoke and dust annoying,
Unmarried Misses hoping to make hits,
And new-wed couples fresh from Tunbridge toying.
Laceman and placeman, ministers and wits,
And quackers of both sexes, much enjoying
A morning's reading by the ocean's rim,
That sect delighting in the sea's broad brim.

And lo! amongst all these appear'd a creature,
So small, he almost might a twin have been
With Miss Crachami—dwarfish quite in stature,
Yet well proportion'd—neither fat nor lean,
His face of marvellously pleasant feature,
So short and sweet a man was never seen—
All thought him charming at the first beginning—
Alas, ere long they found him far too winning!

He seem'd in love with chance—and chance repaid
His ardent passion with her fondest smile,
The sunshine of good luck, without a shade,
He staked and won—and won and staked—the bile
It stirr'd of many a man and many a maid,
To see at every venture how that vile
Small gambler snatch'd—and how he won them too—
A living Pam, omnipotent at loo!

Miss Wiggins set her heart upon a box,
'Twas handsome, rosewood, and inlaid with brass,
And dreamt three times she garnish'd it with stocks
Of needles, silks, and cottons—but alas!
She lost it wide awake.—We thought Miss Cox
Was lucky—but she saw three caddies pass
To that small imp;—no living luck could loo him!
Sir Stamford would have lost his Raffles to him!

And so he climb'd—and rode, and won—and walk'd,
The wondrous topic of the curious swarm
That haunted the Parade. Many were balk'd
Of notoriety by that small form
Pacing it up and down:—some even talk'd
Of ducking him—when lo! a dismal storm
Stepp'd in—one Friday, at the close of day—
And every head was turn'd another way—

Watching the grander guest. It seem'd to rise
Bulky and slow upon the southern brink
Of the horizon—fann'd by sultry sighs—
So black and threatening, I cannot think
Of any simile, except the skies
Miss Wiggins sometime *shades* in Indian ink—
Miss-shapen blotches of such heavy vapour,
They seem a deal more solid than her paper.

As for the sea, it did not fret, and rave,
And tear its waves to tatters, and so dash on
The stony-hearted beach ;—some bards would have
It always rampant, in that idle fashion,—
Whereas the waves roll'd in, subdued and grave,
Like schoolboys, when the master's in a passion,
Who meekly settle in and take their places,
With a very quiet awe on all their faces.

Some love to draw the ocean with a head,
Like troubled table-beer,—and make it bounce,
And froth, and roar, and fling,—but this, I've said,
Surged in scarce rougher than a lady's flounce :—
But then, a grander contrast thus it bro'd
With the wild welkin, seeming to pronounce
Something more awful in the serious ear,
As one would whisper that a lion's near—

Who just begins to roar : so the hoarse thunder
Growl'd long—but low—a prelude note of death,
As if the stifling clouds yet kept it under,
But still it mutter'd to the sea beneath
Such a continued peal, as made us wonder
It did not pause more oft to take its breath,
Whilst we were panting with the sultry weather,
And hardly cared to wed two words together,

But watch'd the surly advent of the storm,
Much as the brown-check'd planters of Barbadoes
Must watch a rising of the Negro swarm :—
Meantime it steer'd, like Odin's old Armadas,
Right on our coast ;—a dismal, coal black form ;—
Many proud gaits were quell'd—and all bravadoes
Of folly ceased—and sundry idle jokers
Went home to cover up their tongs and poker.

So fierce the lightning flashed.— In all their days
The oldest smugglers had not seen such flashing,
And they are used to many a pretty blaze
To keep their Hollands from an awkward clashing
With hostile cutters in our creeks and bays :—
And truly one could think without much lashing
The fancy, that those coasting clouds so awful
And black, were fraught with spirits as unlawful.

The gay Parade grew thin—all the fair crowd
Vanish'd—as if they knew their own attractions,—
For now the lightning through a near hand cloud
Began to make some very crooked fractions—
Only some few remain'd that were not cow'd,
A few rough sailors, who had been in actions,
And sundry boatmen, that with quick yoo's,
Lest it should *blow*,—were pulling up the *Rose* :

(No flower, but a boat)—some more hauling
The *Regent* by the head :—another crew
With that same cry peculiar to their *calling*—
Were heaving up the *Hope* :—and as they knew
The very gods themselves oft get a mauling
In their own realms, the seamen wisely drew
The *Neptune* rather higher on the beach,
'That he might lie beyond his billows' reach.

And now the storm, with its despotic power
Had all usurp'd the azure of the skies,
Making our daylight darker by an hour,
And some few drops—of an unusual size—
Few and distinct—scarce twenty to the shower,
Fell like huge tear-drops from a Giant's eyes—
But then this sprinkle thicken'd in a trice
And rained much *harder*—in good solid ice.

Oh ! for a very storm of words to show
How this fierce crash of hail came rushing o'er us !
Handel would make the gusty organs blow
Grandly, and a rich storm in music score us ;—
But ev'n his music seem'd composed and low,
When we were *handed* by this Hailstone Chorus ;
Whilst thunder rumbled, with its awful sound,
And frozen comets roll'd along the ground—

As big as bullets:—Lord! how they did batter
Our crazy tiles:—And now the lightning flash'd
Alternate with the dark, until the latter
Was rarest of the two:—the gust too dash'd
So terribly, I thought the hail must shatter
Some panes,—and so it did—and first it smash'd
The very square where I had chose my station
To watch the general illumination.

Another, and another, still came in,
And fell in jingling ruin at my feet,
Making transparent holes that let me win
Some samples of the storm:—Oh! it was sweet
To think I had a shelter for my skin,
Culling them through these “loopholes of retreat”—
Which in a little we began to glaze—
Chiefly with a jacktowel and some baize!

By which, the cloud had pass'd o'erhead, but play'd
Its crooked fires in constant flashes still,
Just in our rear, as though it had array'd
Its heavy batteries at Fairlight Mill,
So that it lit the town, and grandly made
The rugged features of the Castle Hill
Leap, like a birth, from chaos, into light,
And then relapse into the gloomy night—

As parcel of the cloud:—the clouds themselves,
Like monstrous crags and summits everlasting,
Piled each on each in most gigantic shelves,
That Milton's devils were engaged in blasting.—
We could e'en fancy Satan and his elves
Busy upon those crags, and ever casting
Huge fragments loose,—and that we *felt* the sound
They made in falling to the startled ground.

And so the tempest scowl'd away,—and soon
Timidly shining through its skirts of jet,
We saw the rim of the pacific moon,
Like a bright fish entangled in a net,
Flashing its silver sides,—how sweet a loon,
Seem'd her sweet light, as though it would begot,
With that fair smile, a calm upon the seas —
Peace in the sky—and coolness in the breeze!

Meantime the hail had ceased.—and all the brood
Of glaziers stole abroad to count their gains;—
At every window, there were maids who stood
Lamenting o'r the glass's small remains,—
Or with coarse linen made the fractions good,
Stanching the wind in all the wounded panes,—
Or, holding candles to the panes, in doubt:
The wind resolved—blowing the candles out.

No house was whole that had a southern front,—
No green-house but the same mishap befell;
Bow-windows and *bell*-glasses bore the brunt,—
No sex in glass was spared!—For those who dwell
On each hill side, you might have swam a punt
In any of their parlours;—Mrs. Snell
Was slopp'd out of her seat,—and Mr. Hitchin
Had a *flow'r*-garden wash'd into a *Kitchen*.

But still the sea was mild, and quite disclaim'd
The recent violence.—Each after each
The gentle waves a gentle murmur framed,
Tapping, like Woodpeckers, the hollow beach
Howbeit his *weather* eye the seaman aim'd
Across the calm, and hinted by his speech
A gale next morning—and when morning broke,
There was a gale—"quite equal to *Lespoke*."

Before high water—(it were better far
To christen it not *water* then, but *waiter*.
For then the tide is *serving at the bar*)
Rose such a swell—I never saw one greater!
Black, jagged billows rearing up in war
Like ragged roaring bears against the baiter,
With lots of froth upon the shingle shed,
Like stout pour'd out with a fine *beachy head*.

No open boat was open to a fare,
Or launch'd that morn on seven-shilling trips,
No bathing woman waded—none would dare
A dipping in the wave—but waived their dips,
No seagull ventured on the stormy air,
And all the dreary coast was clear of ships;
For two *lea shores* upon the river Lea
Are not so perilous as one at sea.

Awe-struck we sat, and gazed upon the scene
Before us in such horrid hurly-burly,—
A boiling ocean of mix'd black and green,
A sky of copper colour, grim and surly.—
When lo, in that vast hollow scoop'd between
Two rolling Alps of water,—white and curly!
We saw a pair of little arms a-skimming,
Much like a first or last attempt at swimming!

Sometimes a hand—sometimes a little shoe—
Sometimes a skirt—sometimes a hank of hair
Just like a dabbled seaweed rose to view,
Sometimes a knee, sometimes a back was bare—
At last a frightful summerset he threw
Right on the shingles. Any one could swear
The lad was dead—without a chance of perjury,
And batter'd by the surge beyond all surgery!

However we snatch'd up the corse thus thrown
 Intending, Christian-like, to sod and turf it,
 And after venting Pity's sigh and groan,
 Then Curiosity began with *her* fit;
 And lo! the features of the Small Unknown!
 'Twas he that of the surf had had this susseit!—
 And in his fob, the cause of late monopolies,
 We found a contract signed Mephistophiles!

A bond of blood, whereby the sinner gave
 His forfeit soul to Satan in reversion,
 Providing in this world he was to have
 A lordship over luck, by whose exertion
 He might control the course of cards, and brave
 All throws of dice,—but on a sea excursion
 The juggling Demon, in his usual vein,
 Seized the last cast—and *Nick'd* him in the *main*!

 THOSE EVENING BELLS.

“I'D BE A PARODY.”

THOSE Evening Bells, those Evening Bells,
 How many a tale their music tells,
 Of Yorkshire cakes and crumpets prime,
 And letters only just in time!—

144 HYMENEAL RETROSPECTIONS.

'The Muffin-boy has pass'd away,
The Postman gone—and I must pay,
For down below Deaf Mary dwells,
And does not hear those Evening Bells.

And so 't will be when she is gone,
'The tuneful peal will still ring on,
And other maids with timely yells
Forget to stay those Evening Bells.



HYMENEAL RETROSPECTIONS.



O KATE! my dear Partner, through joy and through
strife

When I look back at Hymen's dear day,
Not a lovelier bride ever chang'd to a wife,
'Though you're now so old, wizened and grey!

Those eyes, then, were stars, shining rulers of fate!
But as liquid as stars in a pool;
Though now they're so dim, they appear, my dear
Kate,
Just like gooseberries boiled for a fool!

That brow was like marble, so smooth and so fair ;
Though it's wrinkled so crookedly now,
As if Time, when those furrows were made by the share,
Had been tipsy whilst driving his plough !

Your nose, it was such as the sculptors all chose,
When a Venus demanded their skill ;
Though now it can hardly be reckon'd a nose,
But a sort of Poll-Parrotty Bill !

Your mouth, it was then quite a bait for the bees,
Such a nectar there hung on each lip ,
Though now it has taken that lemon-like squeeze,
Not a blue-bottle comes for a sip !

Your chin, it was one of Love's favourite haunts,
From its dimple he could not get loose ;
Though now the neat hand of a barber it wants,
Or a singe, like the breast of a goose !

How rich were those locks, so abundant and full,
With their ringlets of auburn so deep !
Though now they look only like fizzles of wool,
By a bramble torn off from a sheep !

That neck, not a swan could excel it in grace,
While in whiteness it vied with your arms ;
Though now a grave 'kerchief you properly place,
To conceal that scrag-end of your charms !

Your figure was tall, then, and perfectly straight,
Though it now has two twists from upright—
But bless you ! still bless you ! my Partner ! my Kate !
Though you be such a perfect old fright !

THE FAREWELL

TO A FRENCH AIR.

FARE thee well,
Gabrielle !
Whilst I join France,
With bright cuirass and lance !
Trumpets swell,
Gabrielle !
War horses prance,
And Cavaliers advance !

In the night,
Ere the fight,
In the night,
I'll think of thee !
And in pray'r,
Lady fair,
In *thy* pray'r,
Then think of me !

Death may knell,
Gabrielle!
Where my plumes dance,
By arquebuss or lance!
Then farewell,
Gabrielle!
Take my last glance!
Fair Miracle of France!

ODE ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF
CLAPHAM ACADEMY.

Ah me! those old familiar bounds!
That classic house, those classic grounds
My pensive thought recalls!
What tender urchins now confine,
What little captives now repine,
Within yon irksome walls?

Ay, that's the very house! I know
Its ugly windows, ten a-row!
Its chimneys in the rear!
And there's the iron rod so high,
That drew the thunder from the sky
And turn'd our table-beer!

There I was birch'd ! there I was bred !
 There like a little Adam fed
 From Learning's woeful tree !
 The weary tasks I used to con !—
 The hopeless leaves I wept upon !—
 Most fruitless leaves to me !

The summon'd class !—the awful how !—
 I wonder who is master now
 And wholesome anguish sheds !
 How many ushers now employs,
 How many maids to see the boys
 Have nothing in their heads !

And Mrs. S***?—Doth she abet
 (Like Pallas in the parlour) yet
 Some favour'd two or three,—
 The little Crichtons of the hour,
 Her muffin-medals that devour,
 And swill her prize—bohea ?

Ay, there's the playground ! there's the lime,
 Beneath whose shade in summer's prime
 So wildly I have read !—
 Who sits there *now*, and skims the cream
 Of young Romance, and weaves a dream
 Of Love and Cottage-bread ?

Who struts the Randall of the walk ?
Who models tiny heads in chalk ?
Who scoops the light canoe ?
What early genius buds apace ?
Where's Poynter ? Harris ? Bowers ? Chase ?
Hal Baylis ? blithe Carew ?

Alack ! they re gone—a thousand ways !
And some are serving in “ the Greys,”
And some have perish'd young !—
Jack Harris weds his second wife ;
Hal Baylis drives the *wane* of life ;
And blithe Carew—is hung ;

Grave Bowers teaches A B C
To savages at Owhyee
Poor Chase is with the worms !—
All, all are gone—the olden breed !—
New crops of mushroom boys succeed,
“ And push us from our *forms* !”

Lo ! where they scramble forth, and shout,
And leap, and skip, and mob about,
At play where we have play'd !
Some hop, some run, (some fall.) some twine
Their croney arms ; some in the shine,—
And some are in the shade !

Our hearts are dough, our heels are lead,
Our topmast joys fall dull and dead
Like balls with no rebound !
And often with a faded eye
We look behind, and send a sigh
Towards that merry ground !

Then be contented. Thou hast got
The most of heaven in thy young lot ;
There's sky-blue in thy cup !
Thou'lt find thy Manhood all too fast—
Soon come, soon gone ! and Age at last
A sorry *breaking-up* !



THE ROMANCE OF COLOGNE.



'Tis even—on the pleasant banks of Rhine
The thrush is singing, and the dove is cooing,
A youth and maiden on the turf recline
Alone—And he is wooing.

Yet woos in vain, for to the voice of love
No kindly sympathy the Maid discovers,
Though round them both, and in the air above,
The tender Spirit hovers !

Untouch'd by lovely Nature and her laws,
The more he pleads, more coyly she represses ;—
Her lips denies, and now her hand withdraws,
Rejecting his caresses.

Fair is she as the dreams young poets weave,
Bright eyes, and dainty lips, and tresses curly ;
In outward loveliness a child of Eve,
But cold as Nymph of Lurley !

The more Love ties her pity to engross,
The more she chills them with a strange behaviour ;
Now tells her beads, now gazes on the Cross
And Image of the Saviour

Forth goes the Lover with a farewell moan,
As from the presence of a thing inhuman ;—
Oh ! what unholy spell hath turned to stone
The young warm heart of Woman !

* * * * *

'Tis midnight—and the moonbeam, cold and wan,
On bower and river quietly is sleeping,
And o'er the corse of a self-murdered man
The Maiden fair is weeping.

In vain she looks into his glassy eyes,
 No pressure answers to her hand so pressing,
 In her fond arms impassively he lies,
 Clay-cold to her caressing.

Despairing, stunn'd by her eternal loss.
 She flies to succour that may best beseem her;
 But lo! a frowning Figure veils the Cross,
 And hides the blest Redeemer.

With stern right hand it stretches forth a scroll,
 Wherein she reads in melancholy letters,
 The cruel fatal pact that placed her soul
 And her young heart in fetters.

"Wretch! Sinner! Renegade! to truth and God,
 Thy holy faith for human love to barter!"
 No more she hears, but on the bloody sod
 Sinks, Bigotry's last Martyr!

And side by side the hapless Lovers lie:
 Tell me, harsh priest! by yonder tragic token,
 What part hath God in such a Bond, whereby
 Or hearts or vows are broken?



A PLAIN DIRECTION.

In London once I lost my way
In faring to and fro,
And ask'd a little ragged boy
The way that I should go ;
He gave a nod, and then a wink,
And told me to get there
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

I box'd his little saucy cart,
And then away I strode ;
But since I've found that weary path
Is quite a common road.
Utopia is a pleasant place,
But how shall I get there ?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

I've read about a famous town
That drove a famous trade,
Where Wittington walked up and found
A fortune ready made.

The very streets are paved with gold ;
But how shall I get there ?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

I've read about a Fairy Land,
In some romantic tale,
Where Dwarfs, if good, are sure to thrive,
And wicked Giants fail.
My wish is great, my shoes are strong,
But how shall I get there ?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

I've heard about some happy Isle,
Where ev'ry man is free,
And none can lie in bonds for life
For want of L. S. D.
Oh that's the land of Liberty !
But how shall I get there ?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

I've dreamt about some blessed spot,
Beneath the blessed sky,
Where Bread and Justice never rise
Too dear for folks to buy.

It's cheaper than the Ward of Cheap,
But how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

They say there is an ancient House,
As pure as it is old,
Where Members always speak their minds,
And votes are never sold.
I'm fond of all antiquities,
But how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

They say there is a Royal Court
Maintain'd in noble state,
When ev'ry able man, and good,
Is certain to be great!
I'm very fond of seeing sights,
But how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

They say there is a Temple too,
Where Christians come to pray;
But canting knaves and hypocrites,
And bigots keep away.

O ! that's the parish church for me !
But how shall I get there ?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

They say there is a Garden fair,
That's haunted by the dove,
Where love of gold doth ne'er eclipse
The golden light of love—
The place must be a Paradise,
But how shall I get there ?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

I've heard there is a famous Land
For public spirit known—
Whose Patriots love its interests
Much better than their own.
The Land of Promise sure it is !
But how shall I get there ?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

I've read about a fine Estate,
A mansion large and strong ;
A view all over Kent and back,
And going for a song

George Robins knows the very spot,
But how shall *I* get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

I've heard there is a Company
All formal and enroll'd,
Will take your smallest coin
And give it back in gold.
Of course the office door is mobb'd,
But how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

I've heard about a pleasant land,
Where omelettes grow on trees,
And roasted pigs run, crying out,
"Come eat me, if you please."
My appetite is rather keen,
But how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

BALLAD.

Sigh on, sad heart, for Love's eclipse
And Beauty's fairest queen,
Though 'tis not for my peasant lips
To soil her name between :
A king might lay his sceptre down,
But I am poor and nought,
The brow should wear a golden crown
That wears her in its thought.

The diamonds glancing in her hair,
Whose sudden beams surprise,
Might bid such humble hopes beware
The glancing of her eyes ;
Yet looking once, I look'd too long,
And if my love is sin,
Death follows on the heels of wrong,
And kills the crime within.

Her dress seem'd wove of lily leaves,
It was so pure and fine,—
O lofty wears, and lowly weaves,—
But hodden-grey is mine ;

And homely hose must step apart,
Where garter'd princes stand,
But may he wear my love at heart
That wins her lily hand!

Alas! there's far from russet frieze
To silks and satin gowns,
But I doubt if God made like degrees,
In courtly hearts and clowns.
My father wrong'd a maiden's mirth,
And brought her cheeks to blame,
And all that's lordly of my birth
Is my reproach and shame!

'Tis vain to weep,—'tis vain to sigh,
'Tis vain, this idle speech,
For where her happy pearls do lie,
My tears may never reach;
Yet when I'm gone, e'en lofty pride
May say, of what has been,
His love was nobly born and died,
Though all the rest was mean!

My speech is rude,—but speech is weak
Such love as mine to tell.
Yet had I words, I dare not speak.
So, Lady, fare thee well;

I will not wish thy better state
Was one of low degree,
But I must weep that partial fate
Made such a churl of me.

SONG.

THE stars are with the voyager
Wherever he may sail ;
The moon is constant to her time ;
The sun will never fail ;
But follow, follow round the world,
The green earth and the sea,
So love is with the lover's heart,
Wherever he may be.

Wherever he may be, the stars
Must daily lose their light ;
The moon will veil her in the shade ;
The sun will set at night.
The sun may set, but constant love
Will shine when he's away ;
So that dull night is never night,
And day is brighter day.

TO * * * * *
WITH A FLASK OF RHINE WATER.

THE old Catholic City was still,
In the Minster the vespers were sung.
And, re-echoed in cadences shrill,
The last call of the trumpet had rung;
While, across the broad stream of the Rhine,
The full Moon cast a silvery zone;
And methought, as I gazed on its shine,
"Surely that is the Eau de Cologne,"
I inquired not the place of its source,
If it ran to the east or the west;
But my heart took a note of its course,
That it flow'd towards Her I love best—
That it flow'd towards Her I love best.
Like those wandering thoughts of my own,
And the fancy such sweetness possess'd,
That the Rhine seemed all Eau de Cologne!

TO AN ABSENTEE.

O'ER hill, and dale, and distant sea,
Through all the miles that stretch between
My thought must fly to rest on thee,
And would—though worlds should intervene.

Nay, thou art now so dear, methinks
The farther we are forced apart,
Affection's firm elastic links
But bind thee closer round the heart.

For now we sever each from each,
I learn what I have lost in thee;
Alas, that nothing else could teach
How great indeed my love should be!

Farewell! I did not know thy worth;
But thou art gone, and now 'tis prized.
So angels walked unknown on earth,
But when they flew were recognised!

HYMN TO THE SUN.

GIVER of glowing light!
Though but a god of other days,
The kings and sages
Of wiser ages
Still live and gladden in thy genial rays!

King of the tuneful lyre,
Still poets' hymns to thee belong
Though lips are cold
Whereon of old
Thy beams all turn'd to worshipping and song!

Lord of the dreadful bow,
None triumph now for Python's death ;
But thou dost save
From hungry grave
The life that hangs upon a summer breath.

Father of rosy day,
No more thy clouds of incense rise ;
But waking flow'rs
At morning hours,
Give out their sweets to meet thee in the skies.

God of the Delphic fane,
No more thou listenest to hymns sublime ;
But they will leave
On winds at eve,
A solemn echo to the end of time.

TO FANCY.

Most delicate Ariel ! submissive thing,
Won by the mind's high magic to its hest,—
Invisible embassy, or secret guest,—
Weighing the light air on a lighter wing ;
Whether into the midnight moon, to bring
Illuminate visions to the eye of rest,—
Or rich romances from the florid West,—
Or to the sea, for mystic whispering,—

Still by thy charm'd allegiance to the will,
The fruitful wishes prosper in the brain,
As by the fingering of fairy skill,—
Moonlight, and waters, and soft music's strain,
Odours, and blooms, and *my* Miranda's smile,
Making this dull world an enchanted isle.

THE PLEA OF THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES.

'Twas in that mellow season of the year
When the hot sun singes the yellow leaves
Till they be gold,—and with a broader sphere
The Moon looks down on Ceres and her sheaves;
When more abundantly the spider weaves,
And the cold wind breathes from a chiller clime;—
That forth I fared, on one of those still eves,
Touch'd with the dewy sadness of the time,
To think how the bright months had spent their prime.

So that, wherever I address'd my way,
I seem'd to track the melancholy feet
Of him that is the Father of Decay,
And spoils at once the sour weed and the sweet;—
Wherefore regretfully I made retreat
To some unwasted regions of my brain,
Charm'd with the light of summer and the heat,
And bade that bounteous season bloom again,
And sprout fresh flowers in mine own domain.

It was a shady and sequester'd scene,
Like those famed gardens of Boccaccio,
Planted with his own laurels ever green,
And roses that for endless summer blow ;
And there were fountain springs to overflow
Their marble basins,—and cool green arcades
Of tall o'erarching sycamores, to throw
Athwart the dappled path their dancing shades,—
With timid coneys cropping the green blades.

And there were crystal pools, peopled with fish,
Argent and gold ; and some of Tyrian skin,
Some crimson-barr'd ;—and ever at a wish
They rose obsequious till the wave grew thin
As glass upon their backs, and then dived in,
Quenching their ardent scales in watery gloom ;
Whilst others with fresh hues row'd forth to win
My changeable regard,—for so we doom
Things born of thought to vanish or to bloom.

And there were many birds of many dyes,
From tree to tree still faring to and fro,
And stately peacocks with their splendid eyes,
And gorgeous pheasants with their golden glow,
Like Iris just bedabbled in her bow,
Besides some vocalists without a name,
That oft on fairy errands come and go,
With accents magical ;—and all were tame,
And peckèd at my hand where'er I came.

And for my sylvan company, in lieu
Of Pampinea with her lively peers,
Sate Queen Titania with her pretty crew,
All in their liveries quaint, with elfin gears,
For she was gracious to my childish years,
And made me free of her enchanted round ;
Wherefore this dreamy scene she still endears,
And plants her court upon a verdant mound,
Fenced with umbrageous woods and groves profound.

"Ah me," she cries, "was ever moonlight seen
So clear and tender for our midnight trips ?
Go some one forth, and with a trump convene
My lieges all !"—Away the goblin skips
A pace or two apart, and deftly strips
The ruddy skin from a sweet rose's cheek,
Then blows the shuddering leaf between his lips,
Making it utter forth a shrill small shriek,
Like a fray'd bird in the grey owl's beak.

And lo ! upon my fix'd delighted ken
Appear'd the loyal Fays.—Some by degrees
Crept from the primrose buds that opened then,
And some from bell-shaped blossoms like the bees,
Some from the dewy meads, and rushy leas,
Flew up like chafers when the rustics pass ;
Some from the rivers, others from tall trees
Dropp'd, like shed blossoms, silent to the grass,
Spirits and elfins small, of every class.

Peri and Pixy, and quaint Puck the Antic,
Brought Robin Goodfellow, that merry swain
And stealthy Mab, queen of old realms romantic,
Came too, from distance, in her tiny wain,
Fresh dripping from a cloud—some bloomy rain,
Then circling the bright Moon, had wash'd her car,
And still bedew'd it with a various stain :
Lastly came Ariel, shooting from a star,
Who bears all fairy embassies afar.

But Oberon, that night elsewhere exiled,
Was absent, whether some distemper'd spleen
Kept him and his fair mate unreconciled,
Or warfare with the Gnome (whose race had been
Sometime obnoxious), kept him from his queen,
And made her now peruse the starry skies
Prophetical, with such an absent mien ;
Howbeit, the tears stole often to her eyes,
And oft the Moon was incensed with her sighs—

Which made the elves sport drearily, and soon
Their hushing dances languish'd to a stand,
Like midnight leaves, when, as the Zephyrs swoon,
All on their drooping stems they sink unfann'd,—
So into silence droop'd the fairy band,
To see their empress dear so pale and still
Crowding her softly round on either hand,
As pale as frosty snowdrops, and as chill,
To whom the sceptred dame reveals her ill.

"Alas," quoth she, "ye know our fairy lives
Are leased upon the fickle faith of men ;
Not measured out against Fate's mortal knives,
Like human gossamers,—we perish when
We fade and are forgot in worldly ken—
Though poesy has thus prolong'd our date
Thanks to the sweet Bard's auspicious pen
That rescued us so long !—howbeit of late
I feel some dark misgivings of our fate.

"And this dull day my melancholy sleep
Hath been so thronged with images of woe,
That even now I cannot choose but weep
To think this was some sad prophetic show
Of future horror to befall us so,—
Of mortal wreck and uttermost distress,—
Yea, our poor empire's fall and overthrow,—
For this was my long vision's dreadful stress,
And when I waked my trouble was not less.

"Whenever to the clouds I tried to seek,
Such leaden weight dragg'd these Icarian wings,
My faithless wand was wavering and weak,
And slimy toads had trespass'd in our rings—
The birds refused to sing for me—all things
Disown'd their old allegiance to our spells ;
The rude bees prick'd me with their rebel stings ;
And, when I pass'd, the valley-lily's bells
Rang out, methought, most melancholy knells.

“ And ever on the faint and flagging air
A doleful spirit with a dreary note
Cried in my fearful ear, ‘ Prepare ! prepare ! ’
Which soon I knew came from a raven’s throat,
Perch’d on a cypress-bough not far remote,—
A cursed bird, too crafty to be shot,
That alway cometh with his soot-black coat
To make hearts dreary :—for he is a blot
Upon the book of life, as well ye wot !—

“ Wherefore some while I bribed him to be mute,
With bitter acorns stuffing his foul maw,
Which barely I appeased, when some fresh bruit
Startled me all aheap !—and soon I saw
The horridest shape that ever raised my awe,—
A monstrous giant, very huge and tall,
Such as in elder times, devoid of law,
With wicked might grieved the primeval ball,
And this was sure the deadliest of them all !

“ Gaunt was he as a wolf of Languedoc,
With bloody jaws, and frost upon his crown ;
So from his barren poll one hoary lock
Over his wrinkled front fell far adown,
Well nigh to where his frosty brows did frown
Like jaggèd icicles at cottage eaves ;
And for his coronal he wore some brown
And bristled ears gather’d from Ceres’ sheaves,
Entwined with certain sere and russet leaves.

“ And lo ! upon a mast rear'd far aloft,
He bore a very bright and crescent blade.
The which he waved so dreadfully, and oft,
In meditative spite, that, sore dismay'd,
I crept into an acorn-cup for shade ;
Meanwhile the horrid effigy went by :
I trow his look was dreadful, for it made
The trembling birds betake them to the sky,
For every leaf was lifted by his sigh.

“ And ever, as he sigh'd, his foggy breath
Blurr'd out the landscape like a flight of smoke :
Thence knew I this was either dreary Death
Or Time who leads all creatures to his stroke.
Ah wretched me ! ”—Here, even as she spoke,
The melancholy Shape came gliding in,
And lean'd his back against an antique oak,
Folding his wings, that were so fine and thin.
They scarce were seen against the Dryad's skin.

Then what a fear seized all the little rout !
Look how a flock of panic'd sheep will stare—
And huddle close—and start and—wheel about,
Watching the roaming mongrel here and there,—
So did that sudden Apparition scare
All close aheap those small affrighted things ;
Nor sought they now the safety of the air,
As if some leaden spell withheld their wings ;
But who can fly that ancientest of Kings ?

Whom now the Queen, with a forestalling tear
And previous sigh, beginneth to entreat,
Bidding him spare for love, her lieges dear ;
“ Alas ! ” quoth she, “ is there no nodding wheat
Ripe for thy crooked weapon, and more meet,—
Or wither’d leaves to ravish from the tree,—
Or crumbling battlements for thy defeat ?
Think but what vaunting monuments there be
Builded in spite and mockery of thee.

“ O fret away the fabric walls of Fame,
And grind down marble Cæsars with the dust :
Make tombs inscriptionless—raze each high name,
And waste old armours of renown with rust :
Do all of this, and thy revenge is just :
Make such decays the trophies of thy prime,
And check Ambition’s overweening lust,
That dares exterminating war with Time,—
But we are guiltless of that lofty crime.

“ Frail feeble sprites !—the children of a dream !
Leased on the sufferance of fickle men,
Like motes dependent on the sunny beam,
Living but in the sun’s indulgent ken,
And when that light withdraws, withdrawing then ;—
So do we flutter in the glance of youth
And fervid fancy,—and so perish when
The eye of faith grows agèd ;—in sad truth,
Feeling thy sway, O Time ! though not thy tooth !

"Where be those old divinities forlorn,
That dwelt in trees, or haunted in a stream?
Alas! their memories are dimm'd and torn,
Like the remainder tatters of a dream:
So will it fare with our poor thrones, I deem;—
For us the same dark trench Oblivion delves,
That holds the wastes of every human scheme.
O spare us then,—and these our pretty elves,—
We soon, alas! shall perish of ourselves!"

Now as she ended, with a sigh, to name
Those old Olympians, scatter'd by the whirl
Of Fortune's giddy wheel and brought to shame,
Methought a scornful and malignant curl
Show'd on the lips of that malicious churi,
To think what noble havocs he had made;
So that I fear'd he all at once would huri
The harmless fairies into endless shade,—
Howbeit he stopp'd awhile to whet his blade.

Pity it was to hear the elfins' wail
Rise up in concert from their mingled dread;
Pity it was to see them, all so pale,
Gaze on the grass as for a dying bed;—
But Puck was seated on a spider's thread,
That hung between two branches of a briar,
And 'gan to swing and gambol, heels o'er head,
Like any Southwark tumbler on a wire,
For him no present grief could long inspire.

Meanwhile the Queen with many piteous drops,
Falling like tiny sparks full fast and free,
Bedews a pathway from her throne ;—and stops
Before the foot of her arch enemy,
And with her little arms enfolds his knee,
'That shows more grisly from that fair embrace ;
But she will ne'er depart. " Alas ! " quoth she,
" My painful fingers I will here enlace
Till I have gain'd your pity for our race.

" What have we ever done to earn this grudge,
And hate—(if not too humble for thy hating ?)—
Look o'er our labours and our lives, and judge
If there be any ills of our creating ;
For we are very kindly creatures, dating
With nature's charities still sweet and bland :—
O think this murder worthy of debating ! "
Herewith she makes a signal with her hand,
To beckon some one from the Fairy band.

Anon I saw one of those elfin things,
Clad all in white like any chorister,
Come fluttering forth on his melodious wings.
That made soft music at each little stir,
But something louder than a bee's demur
Before he lights upon a bunch of broom,
And thus 'gan he with Saturn to confer,—
And O his voice was sweet, touch'd with the gloom
Of that sad theme that argued of his doom !

Quoth he, " We make all melodies our care,
That no false discords may offend the Sun,
Music's great master—tuning everywhere
All pastoral sounds and melodies, each one
Duly to place and season, so that none
May harshly interfere. We rouse at morn
The shrill sweet lark ; and when the day is done,
Hush silent pauses for the bird forlorn,
That singeth with her breast against a thorn.

" We gather in loud choirs the twittering race,
That make a chorus with their single note ;
And tend on new-fledged birds in every place,
That duly they may get their tunes by rote ;
And oft, like echoes, answering remote,
We hide in thickets from the feather'd throng,
And strain in rivalry each throbbing throat,
Singing in shrill responses all day long,
Whilst the glad truant listens to our song.

" Wherefore, great King of Years, as thou dost love
The raining music from a morning cloud,
When vanish'd larks are carolling above,
To wake Apollo with their pipings loud ;—
If ever thou hast heard in leafy shroud
The sweet and plaintive Sappho of the dell,
Show thy sweet mercy on this little crowd.
And we will muffle up the sheepfold bell
Whene'er thou listenest to Philomel."

Then Saturn thus :—" Sweet is the merry lark,
That carols in man's ear so clear and strong ;
And youth must love to listen in the dark
That tuneful elegy of 'Tereus' wrong ;
But I have heard that ancient strain too long,
For sweet is sweet but when a little strange,
And I grow weary for some newer song ;
For wherefore had I wings, unless to range
Through all things mutable, from change to change ?

" But wouldst thou hear the melodies of Time,
Listen when sleep and drowsy darkness roll
Over hush'd cities, and the midnight chime
Sounds from their hundred clocks, and deep bells toll
Like a last knell over the dead world's soul,
Saying, ' Time shall be final of all things,
Whose late, last voice must elegise the whole,'—
O then I clap aloft my brave broad wings,
And make the wide air tremble while it rings ! "

' Then next a fair Eve-Fay made meek address,
Saying, " We be the handmaids of the Spring ;
In sign whereof, May, the quaint broideress,
Hath wrought her samplers on our gauzy wing.
We tend upon buds' birth and blossoming,
And count the leafy tributes that they owe—
As, so much to the earth—so much to fling
In showers to the brook—so much to go
In whirlwinds to the clouds that made them grow.

"The pastoral Cowslips are our little pets,
And daisy stars, whose firmament is green ;
Pansies, and those veil'd nuns, meek violets,
Sighing to that warm world from which they screen ;
And golden daffodils, pluck'd for May's Queen ;
And lonely harebells, quaking on the heath ;
And Hyacinth, long since a fair youth seen,
Whose tuneful voice, turn'd fragrance in his breath,
Kiss'd by sad Zephyr, guilty of his death.

"The widow'd primrose weeping to the moon
And Saffron crocus in whose chalice bright
A cool libation hoarded for the noon
Is kept—and she that purifies the light,
The virgin lily, faithful to her white,
Whereon Eve wept in Eden for her shame ;
And the most dainty rose, Aurora's spright,
Our every godchild, by whatever name—
Spare us our lives, for we did nurse the same ! "

Then that old Mower stamp'd his heel, and struck
His hurtful scythe against the harmless ground,
Saying "Ye foolish imps, when am I stuck
With gaudy buds, or like a wooer crown'd
With flow'ry chaplets, save when they are found
Wither'd?—Whenever have I pluck'd a rose,
Except to scatter its vain leaves around?
For so all gloss of beauty I oppose,
And bring decay on every flow'r that blows.

"Or when am I so wroth as when I view
The wanton pride of summer;—how she decks
The birthday world with blossoms ever-new,
As if Time had not lived, and heap'd great wrecks
Of years on years?—O then I bravely vex
And catch the gay Months in their gaudy plight,
And slay them with the wreaths about their necks,
Like foolish heifers in the holy rite,
And raise great trophies to my ancient might."

Then saith another, "We are kindly things,
And like her offspring nestle with the dove,—
Witness these hearts embroider'd on our wings,
To show our constant patronage of love:—
We sit at even, in sweet bow'rs above
Lovers, and shake rich odours on the air,
To mingle with their sighs; and still remove
The startling owl, and bid the bat forbear
Their privacy, and haunt some other where.

"And we are near the mother when she sits
Beside her infant in its wicker bed;
And we are in the fairy scene that flits
Across its tender brain: sweet dreams we shed,
And whilst the little merry soul is fled
Away, to sport with our young elves, the while
We touch the dimpled cheek with roses red,
And tickle the soft lips until they smile,
So that their careful parents they beguile.

"O then, if ever thou hast breathed a vow
At Love's dear portal, or at pale moon-rise
Crush'd the dear curl on a regardful brow,
That did not frown thee from thy honey prize—
If ever thy sweet son sat on thy thighs,
And wooed thee from thy careful thoughts within
To watch the harmless beauty of his eyes,
Or glad thy fingers on his smooth soft skin,
For Love's dear sake, let us thy pity win!"

Then Saturn fiercely thus:—"What joy have I
In tender babes, that have devour'd mine own,
Whenever to the light I heard them cry,
Till foolish Rhea cheated me with stone?
Whereon, till now, is my great hunger shown,
In monstrous dint of my enormous tooth;
And—but the peopled world is too full grown
For hunger's edge—I would consume all youth
At one great meal, without delay or ruth!

"For I am well nigh crazed and wild to hear
How boastful fathers taunt me with their breed,
Saying, 'We shall not die nor disappear,
But, in these other selves, ourselves succeed
Ev'n as ripe flowers pass into their seed
Only to be renew'd from prime to prime,'
All of which boastings I am force to read,
Besides a thousand challenges to 'Time,
Which bragging lovers have compiled in rhyme.

"Wherefore, when they are sweetly met o' nights,
There will I steal and with my hurried hand
Startle them suddenly from their delights
Before the next encounter had been plann'd,
Ravishing hours in little minutes spann'd;
But when they say farewell, and grieve apart,
Then like a leaden statue I will stand,
Meanwhile their many tears encrust my dart,
And with a ragged edge cut heart from heart."

Then next a merry Woodsman clad in green,
Stept vanward from his mates, that idly stood
Each at his proper ease, as they had been
Nursed in the liberty of old Shérwood,
And wore the livery of Robin Hood,
Who wont in forest shades to dine and sup,—
So come this chief right frankly, and made good
His haunch against his axe, and thus spoke up,
Doffing his cap, which was an acorn's cup :—

"We be small foresters and gay, who tend
On trees, and all their furniture of green,
Training the young boughs airily to bend,
And show blue snatches of the sky between ;—
Or knit more close intricacies, to screen
Birds' crafty dwellings, as may hide them best,
But most the timid blackbird's—she that, seen,
Will bear black poisonous berries to her nest,
Lest man should cage the darlings of her breast.

“We bend each tree in proper attitude,
And founting willows train in silvery falls;
We frame all shady roofs and arches rude,
And verdant aisles leading to Dryads’ halls,
Or deep recesses where the Echo calls;—
We shape all plummy trees against the sky,
And carve tall elms’ Corinthian capitals,—
When sometimes, as our tiny hatchets ply,
Men say, the tapping woodpecker is nigh.

“Sometimes we scoup the squirrel’s hollow cell,
And sometimes carve quaint letters on trees’ rind,
That haply some lone musing wight may spell
Dainty Aminta,—Gentle Rosalind,—
Or chastest Laura,—sweetly call’d to mind
In sylvian solitudes, ere he lies down;—
And sometimes we enrich grey stems with twined
And vagrant ivy,—or rich moss, whose brown
Burns into gold as the warm sun goes down.

“And, lastly, for mirth’s sake and Christmas cheer,
We bear the seedling berries, for increase,
To graft the Druid oaks, from year to year,
Careful that misletoe may never cease;—
Wherefore, if thou dost prize the shady peace
Of sombre forests, or to see light break
Through sylvan cloisters, and in spring release
Thy spirit amongst leaves from careful ake,
Spare us our lives for the Green Dryad’s sake.”

Then Saturn with a frown :—" Go forth, and fell
Oak for your coffins, and thenceforth lay by
Your axes for the rust, and bid farewell
To all sweet birds, and the blue peeps of sky
Through tangled branches, for ye shall not spy
The next green generation of the tree ;
But hence with the dead leaves, whene'er they fly,—
Which in the bleak air I would rather see,
'Than flights of the most tuneful birds that be

" For I dislike all prime, and verdant pets,
Ivy except, that on the aged wall
Preys with its worm like roots, and daily frets
The crumbled tower it seems to league withal,
King-like, worn down by its own coronal :—
Neither in forest haunts love I to won,
Before the golden plumage 'gins to fall,
And leaves the brown bleak limbs with few leaves on,
Or bare—like Nature in her skeleton.

" For then sit I amongst the crooked boughs,
Wooing dull Memory with kindred sighs ;
And there in rustling nuptials we espouse,
Smit by the sadness in each other's eyes ;—
But Hope must have green bowers and blue skies,
And must be courted with the gauds of Spring ;
Whilst Youth leans god-like on her lap, and cries,
' What shall we always do, but love and sing ? '—
And Time is reckon'd a discarded thing."

Here in my dream it made me fret to see
How Puck, the antic, all this dreary while
Had blithely jested with calamity,
With mis-timed mirth mocking the doleful style
Of his sad comrades, till it raised my bile
To see him so reflect their grief aside,
Turning their solemn looks to half a smile—
Like a straight stick shown crooked in the tide;—
But soon a novel advocate I spied.

Quoth he—"We teach all natures to fulfil
Their fore-appointed crafts, and instincts meet,—
The bee's sweet alchemy,—the spider's skill,—
The pismire's care to garner up his wheat,—
And rustic masonry to swallows fleet,—
The lapwing's cunning to preserve her nest,—
But most, that lesser pelican, the sweet
And shilly ruddock, with its bleeding breast,
Its tender pity of poor babes distressed.

"Sometimes we cast our shapes, and in sleek skins
Delve with the timid mole, that aptly delves
From our example; so the spider spins,
And eke the silk-worm, pattern'd by ourselves:
Sometimes we travail on the summer shelves
Of early bees, and busy toils commence,
Watch'd of wise men, that know not we are elves,
But gaze and marvel at our stretch of sense,
And praise our human-like intelligence.

“Wherefore, by thy delight in that old tale,
And plaintive dirges the late robins sing,
What time the leaves are scattered by the gale,
Mindful of that old forest burying;—
As thou dost love to watch each tiny thing,
For whom our craft most curiously contrives,
If thou hast caught a bee upon the wing,
To take his honey-bag,—spare us our lives,
And we will pay the ransom in full hives.”

“Now by my glass,” quoth Time, “ye do offend
In teaching the brown bees that careful lore,
And frugal ants, whose millions would have end,
But they lay up for need a timely store,
And travail with the seasons evermore;
Whereas Great Mammoth long hath pass’d away,
And none but I can tell what hide he wore;
Whilst purblind men, the creatures of a day,
In riddling wonder his great bones survey.”

Then came an elf, right beauteous to behold,
Whose coat was like a brooklet that the sun
Hath all embroider’d with its crooked gold,
It was so quaintly wrought and overrun
With spangled trceries,—most meet for one
That was a warden of the pearly streams;—
And as he stept out of the shadows dun,
His jewels sparkled in the pale moon’s gleams,
And shot into the air their pointed beams.

Quoth he,—“We bear the gold and silver keys
Of bubbling springs and fountains, that below.
Course thro’ the veiny earth,—which when they freeze
Into hard crysolites, we bid to flow,
Creeping like subtle snakes, when, as they go,
We guide their windings to melodious falls,
At whose soft murmurings, so sweet and low,
Poets have tuned their smoothest madrigals,
To sing to ladies in their banquet-halls.

“And when the hot sun with his steadfast heat
Parches the river god,—whose dusty urn
Drips miserably, till soon his crystal feet
Against his pebbly floor wax faint and burn,
And languished fish, unpoised, grow sick and yearn,—
Then scoop we hollows in some sandy nook,
And little channels dig, wherein we turn
The thread-worn rivulet, that all forsook
The Naiad-lily, pining for her brook.

“Wherefore, by thy delight in cool green meads,
With living sapphires daintily inlaid,—
In all soft songs of waters and their reeds,—
And all reflections in a streamlet made,
Haply of thy own love, that, disarray’d,
Kills the fair lily with a livelier white,—
By silver trouts upspringing from green shade,
And winking stars reduplicate at night,
Spare us, poor ministers to such delight.”

Howbeit his pleading and his gentle looks
Moved not the spiteful Shade :—Quoth he, “ Your taste
Shoots wide of mine, for I despise the brooks
And slavish rivulets that run to waste
In noontide sweats, or, like poor vassals, haste
To swell the vast dominion of the sea,
In whose great presence I am held disgraced,
And neighbour’d with a king that rivals me
In ancient might and hoary majesty.

“ Whereas I ruled in Chaos, and still keep
The awful secrets of that ancient death,
Before the briny fountains of the deep
Brimm’d up the hollow cavities of earth;—
I saw each trickling Sea-God at his birth,
Each pearly Naiad with her oozy locks,
And infant Titans of enormous girth,
Whose huge young feet yet stumbled on the rocks,
Stunning the early world with frequent shocks.

“ Where now is Titan, with his cumbrous brood,
That scared the world?—By this sharp scythe they fell
And half the sky was cuddled with their blood :
So have all primal giants sigh’d farewell.
No wardens now by sedgy fountains dwell,
Nor pearly Naiads. All their days are done
That strove with Time, untimely, to excel ;
Wherefore I razed their progenies, and none
But my great shadow intercepts the sun ! ”

Then said the timid Fay—" Oh, mighty Time!
Well hast thou wrought the cruel Titans' fall,
For they were stain'd with many a bloody crime:
Great giants work great wrongs,—but we are small.
For love goes lowly ;—but Oppression's tall,
And with surpassing strides goes foremost still
Where love indeed can hardly reach at all ;
Like a poor dwarf o'erburthen'd with good will,
That labours to efface the tracks of ill.—

" Man even strives with Man, but we eschew
The guilty feud, and all fierce strifes abhor ;
Nay, we are gentle as the sweet heaven's dew
Beside the red and hoid drops of war,
Weeping the cruel hates men battle for,
Which worldly bosoms nourish in our spite:
For in the gentle breast we ne'er withdraw,
But only when all love hath taken flight,
And youth's warm gracious heart is harden'd quite.

" So are our gentle natures intertwined
With sweet humanities, and closely knit
In kindly sympathy with human kind.
Witness how we befriend, with elfin wit,
All hopeless maids and lovers,—nor omit
Magical succours unto hearts forlorn :—
We charm man's life, and do not perish it ;—
So judge us by the helps we showed this morn,
To one who held his wretched days in scorn.

“ ’Twas nigh sweet Amwell ;—for the Queen had task’d
Our skill to-day amidst the silver Lea,
Whereon the noontide sun had not yet bask’d ;
Wherefore some patient man we thought to see,
Planted in moss-grown rushes to the knee,
Beside the cloudy margin cold and dim ;—
Howbeit no patient fisherman was he
That cast his sudden shadow from the brim,
Making us leave our toils to gaze on him.

“ His face was ashy pale, and leaden care
Had sunk the levell’d arches of his brow,
Once bridges, for his joyous thoughts to fare
Over those melancholy springs and slow,
That from his piteous eyes began to flow,
And fell anon into the chilly stream ;
Which, as his mimick’d image showed below,
Winkled his face with many a needless seam,
Making grief sadder in its own esteem.

“ And lo ! upon the air we saw him stretch
His passionate arms ! and, in a wayward strain,
He ’gan to elegise that fellow wretch
That with mute gestures answer’d him again,
Saying, ‘ Poor slave, how long wilt thou remain
Life’s sad weak captive in a prison strong,
Hoping with tears to rust away thy chain,
In bitter servitude to worldly wrong ?—
Thou wear’st that mortal livery too long ! ’

"This, with more spleenful speeches and some tears,
When he had spent upon the imaged wave,
Speedily I convened my elfin peers
Under the lily-cups, that we might save
This woeful mortal from a wilful grave
By shrewd diversions of his mind's regret,
Seeing he was mere melancholy's slave,
That sank wherever a dark cloud he met,
And straight was tangled in her secret net.

"Therefore, as still he watch'd the waters flow,
Daintily we transform'd, and with bright fins
Came glancing through the gloom; some from below
Rose like dim fancies when a dream begins,
Snatching the light upon their purple skins;
Then under the broad leaves made slow retire:
One like a golden galley bravely wins
Its radiant course,—another glows like fire,—
Making that wayward man our pranks admire.

"And so he banish'd thought, and quite forgot
All contemplation of that wretched face:
And so we wiled him from that lonely spot
Along the river's brink; till, by heaven's grace,
He met a gentle haunter of the place,
Full of sweet wisdom gather'd from the brooks,
Who there discuss'd his melancholy case
With wholesome texts learn'd from kind nature's books,
Meanwhile he newly trimm'd his lines and hooks."

Herewith the Fairy ceased. Quoth Ariel now—

“Let me remember how I saved a man,
Whose fatal noose was fastened on a bough,
Intended to abridge his sad life's span;
For haply I was by when he began
His stern soliloquy in life's dispraise,
And overheard his melancholy plan,
How he had made a vow to end his days,
And therefore follow'd him in all his ways,

“Through brake and tangled copse, for much he loathed
All populous haunts, and roam'd in forest rude,
To hide himself from man. But I had clothed
My delicate limbs with plumes, and still pursued,
Where only foxes and wild cats intrude,
Till we were come beside an ancient tree
Late blasted by a storm. Here he renew'd
His loud complaints,—choosing that spot to be
The scene of his last horrid tragedy.

“It was a wild and melancholy glen,
Made gloomy by tall firs and cypress dark,
Whose roots, like any bones of buried men,
Push'd through the rotten sod for fear's remark;
A hundred horrid stems, jagged and stark,
Wrestled with crooked arms in hideous fray,
Besides sleek ashes with their dappled bark,
Like crafty serpents climbing for a prey,
With many blasted oaks moss-grown and grey.

“ But here upon his final desperate clause
Suddenly I pronounced so sweet a strain,
Like a pang’d nightingale, it made him pause,
Till half the frenzy of his grief was slain,
The sad remainder oozing from his brain
In timely ecstasies of healing tears,
Which through his ardent eyes began to drain ;—
Meanwhile the deadly Fates unclosed their shears :—
So pity me and all my fated peers ! ”

Thus Ariel ended, and was some time hush’d :
When with the hoary shape a fresh tongue pleads,
And red as rose the gentle Fairy blush’d
To read the records of her own good deeds :—
“ It chanced,” quoth she, “ in seeking through the meads
For honied cowslips, sweetest in the morn,
Whilst yet the buds were hung with dewy beads,
And Echo answer’d to the huntsman’s horn,
We found a babe left in the swarthis forlorn.

“ A little, sorrowful, deserted thing,
Begot of love, and yet no love begetting ;
Guiltless of shame, and yet for shame to wring ;
And too soon banish’d from a mother’s petting,
To churlish nurture and the wide world’s fretting,
For alien pity and unnatural care ;—
Alas ! to see how the cold dew kept wetting
His childish coats, and dabbled all his hair,
Like gossamers across his forehead fair.

“His pretty pouting mouth, witless of speech,
Lay half-way open like a rose-lipp'd shell;
And his young cheek was softer than a peach,
Whereon his tears, for roundness, could not dwell,
But quickly roll'd themselves to pearls, and fell,
Some on the grass, and some against his hand,
Or haply wander'd to the dimpled well,
Which love beside his mouth had sweetly plann'd,
Yet not for tears, but mirth and smilings bland.

“Pity it was to see those frequent tears
Falling regardless from his friendless eyes;
There was such beauty in those twin blue spheres,
As any mother's heart might leap to prize;
Blue were they, like the zenith of the skies
Softened betwixt two clouds, both clear and mild;—
Just touch'd with thought, and yet not over wise,
They show'd the gentle spirit of a child,
Not yet by care or any craft defiled.

“Pity it was to see the ardent sun
Scorching his helpless limbs—it shone so warm;
For kindly shade or shelter he had none,
Nor mother's gentle breast, come fair or storm.
Meanwhile I bade my pitying mates transform
Like grasshoppers, and then, with shrilly cries,
All round the infant noisily we swarm,
Haply some passing rustic to advise—
Whilst providential Heaven our care espies,

“And sends full soon a tender-hearted hind,
Who, wond’ring at our loud unusual note,
Strays curiously aside, and so doth find
The orphan child laid in the grass remote,
And laps the foundling in his russet coat,
Who thence was nurtured in his kindly cot:—
But how he prosper’d let proud London quote,
How wise, how rich, and how renown’d he got,
And chief of all her citizens, I wot.

“Witness his goodly vessels on the Thames,
Whose holds were fraught with costly merchandise,—
Jewels from Ind, and pearls from courtly dames,
And gorgeous silks that Samarcand supplies:
Witness that Royal Bourse he bade arise,
The mart of merchants from the East and West;
Whose slender summit, pointing to the skies,
Still bears, in token of his grateful breast,
The tender grasshopper, his chosen crest—

“The tender grasshopper, his chosen crest,
That all the summer, with a tuneful wing,
Makes merry chirpings in its grassy nest,
Inspired with dew to leap and sing:—
So let us also live, eternal King!
Partakers of the green and pleasant earth:—
Pity it is to slay the meanest thing,
That, like a mote, shines in the smile of mirth:
Enough there is of joy’s decrease and death

“ Enough of pleasure, and delight, and beauty,
Perish'd and gone, and hasting to decay ;—
Enough to sadden even thee, whose duty
Or spite it is to have and to slay :
Too many a lovely race razed quite away,
Hath left large gaps in life and human loving :—
Here then begin thy cruel war to stay,
And spare fresh sighs, and tears, and groans, reproving
Thy desolating hand for our removing.”

Now here I heard a shrill and sudden cry,
And, looking up, I saw the antic Puck
Grapplog with 'Time, who clutch'd him like a fly,
Victim of his own sport,—the jester's luck !
He, whilst his fellows grieved, poor wight, had stuck
His freakish gauds upon the Ancient's brow,
And now his ear, and now his head, would pluck ;
Whereas the angry churl had snatch'd him now,
Crying “ Thou impish mischief, who art thou ? ”

“ Alas ! ” quoth Puck, “ a little random elf,
Born in the sport of nature, like a weed,
For simple sweet enjoyment of myself,
But for no other purpose, worth, or need ;
And yet withal of a most happy breed ;
And there is Robin Goodfellow besides,
My partner dear in many a prankish deed
To make dame Laughter hold her jolly sides,
Like merry mummers twain on holy tides.

" 'Tis we that bob the angler's idle cork,
Till e'en the patient man breathes half a curse ;
We steal the morsel from the gos:ip's fork,
And curdling looks with secret straws disperse,
Or stop the sneezing chanter at mid verse :
And when an infant's beauty prospers ill,
We change, some mothers say, the child at nurse :
But any graver purpose to fulfil,
We have not wit enough and scarce the will.

" We never let the canker melancholy
To gather on our faces like a rust,
But gloss our features with some change of folly,
Taking life's fabled miseries on trust,
But only sorrowing when sorrow must :
We ruminate no sage's solemn cud,
But own ourselves a pinch of lively dust
To frisk upon a wind,—whereas the flood
Of tears would turn us into heavy mud.

" Beslrew those sad interpreters of nature,
Who gloze her lively universal law,
As if she had not form'd our cheerful feature
To be so tickled with the slightest straw !
So let them vex their mumping mouths, and draw
The corners downward, like a wat'ry moon,
And deal in gusty sighs and rainy flaw—
We will not woo foul weather all too soon,
Or nurse November on the lap of June.

“For ours are winging sprites, like any bird,
That shun all stagnant settlements of grief;
And even in our rest our hearts are stir’d,
Like insects settled on a dancing leaf:—
‘This is our small philosophy in brief,
Which thus to teach hath set me all agape:
But dost thou relish it? O hoary chief!
Unclasp thy crooked fingers from my nape,
And I will show thee many a pleasant scrape.”

Then Saturn thus,—shaking his crooked blade
O’erhead, which made aloft a lightning flash
In all the fairies’ eyes, dismally fray’d!
His ensuing voice came like the thunder crash—
Meanwhile the bolt shatters some pine or ash—
“Thou feeble, wanton, foolish, fickle thing!
Whom nought can frighten, sadden, or abash,—
To hope my solemn countenance to wring
To idiot smiles!—but I will prune thy wing!

“Lo! this most awful handle of my scythe
Stood once a May-pole, with a flowery crown,
Which rustics danced around, and maidens blithe,
To wanton pipings;—but I pluck’d it down,
And robed the May Queen in a churchyard gown,
Turning her buds to rosemary and rue;
And all their merry minstrelsy did down,
And laid each lusty leaper in the dew;—
So thou shalt fare—and every jovial crew!”

Here he lets go the struggling imp, to clutch
His mortal engine with each grisly hand,
Which frights the elfin progeny so much,
They huddle in a heap, and trembling stand
All round Titania, like the queen bee's band,
With sighs and tears and very shrieks of woe!—
Meanwhile, some moving argument I planu'd,
To make the stern Shade merciful,—when lo!
He drops his fatal scythe without a blow!

For just at need, a timely Apparition
Steps in between, to bear the awful brunt;
Making him change his horrible position,
To marvel at this comer, brave and blunt,
That dares Time's irresistible affront,
Whose strokes have scan'd even the gods of old:—
Whereas this seem'd a mortal, at mere hunt
For coneys, lighted by the moonshine cold,
Or stalker of stray deer, stealthy and bold.

Who, turning to the small assembled fays,
Doffs to the lily queen his courteous cap,
And holds her beauty for a while in gaze,
With bright eyes kindling at this pleasant hap;
And thence upon the fair moon's silver map,
As if in question of this magic chance,
Laid like a dream upon the green earth's lap;
And then upon old Saturn turns askance,
Exclaiming, with a glad and kindly glance:—

“ Oh, these be Fancy’s revellers by night !
Stealthy companions of the downy moth—
Diana’s motes, that flit in her pale light,
Shunners of sunbeams in diurnal sloth ;
These be the feasters on night’s silver cloth ;—
The gnat with shrilly trump is their convener,
Forth from their flowery chambers, nothing loth,
With lulling tunes to charm the air serener,
Or dance upon the grass to make it greener.

“ These be the pretty genii of the flow’rs,
Daintily fed with honey and pure dew—
Midsummer’s phantoms in her dreaming hours,
King Oberon, and all his merry crew,
The darling puppets of Romance’s view ;
Fairies, and sprites, and goblin elves we call them,
Famous for patronage of lovers true ;—
No harm they act, neither shall harm befall them,
So do not thus with crabbed frowns appal them.”

O what a cry was Saturn’s then !—it made
The fairies quake. “ What care I for their pranks,
However they may lovers choose to aid,
Or dance their roundelays on flow’ry banks ?—
Long must they dance before they earn my thanks,—
So step aside, to some far safer spot,
Whilst with my hungry scythe I mow their ranks,
And leave them in the sun, like weeds, to rot,
And with the next day’s sun to be forgot.”

Anon, he raised afresh his weapon keen ;
But still the gracious Shade disarm'd his aim,
Stepping with brave alacrity between,
And made his sere arm powerless and tame.
His be perpetual glory for the shame
Of hoary Saturn in that grand defeat !—
But I must tell how here Titania came
With all her kneeling lieges, to entreat
His kindly succour, in sad tones, but sweet.

Saying, "Thou seest a wretched queen before thee,
'The fading power of a failing land,
Who for a kingdom kneeleth to implore thee,
Now menaced by this tyrant's spoiling hand ;
No one but thee can hopefully withstand
That crooked blade, he longeth so to lift.
I pray thee blind him with his own vile sand,
Which only times all ruins by its drift,
Or prune his eagle wings that are so swift.

"Or take him by that sole and grizzled tuft,
That hangs upon his bald and barren crown ;
And we will sing to see him so rebuff'd,
And lend our little mights to pull him down,
And make brave sport of his malicious frown,
For all his boastful mockery o'er men.
For thou wast born I know for this renown,
By my most magical and inward ken,
That readeth ev'n at Fate's forestalling pen.

“Nay, by the golden lustre of thine eye,
And by thy brow’s most fair and ample span,
Thought’s glorious palace, framed for fancies high,
And by thy cheek thus passionately wan,
I know the signs of an immortal man,—
Nature’s chief darling, and illustrious mate,
Destined to foil old Death’s oblivious plan,
And shine untarnish’d by the fogs of Fate,
Time’s famous rival till the final date!

“O shield us then from this usurping Time,
And we will visit thee in moonlight dreams;
And teach thee tunes, to wed unto thy rhyme,
And dance about thee in all midnight gleams,
Giving thee glimpses of our magic schemes,
Such as no mortal’s eye hath ever seen;
And, for thy love to us in our extremes,
Will ever keep thy chaplet fresh and green,
Such as no poet’s wreath hath ever been!

“And we’ll distil the aromatic dews,
To charm thy sense, when there shall be no flow’rs;
And flavour’d syrups in thy drinks infuse,
And teach the nightingale to haunt thy bow’rs,
And with our games divert thy weariest hours,
With all that elfin wits can e’er devise.
And, this churl dead, there’ll be no hasting hours
To rob thee of thy joys, as now joy flies:”—
Here she was stopp’d by Saturn’s furious cries.

Whom, therefore, the kind Shade rebukes anew,
Saying, "Thou haggard Sin, go forth, and scoop
Thy hollow coffin in some churchyard yew,
Or make th' autumnal flow'rs turn pale, and droop ;
Or fell the bearded corn, till gleaners stoop
Under fat sheaves,—or blast the piny grove ;—
But here thou shalt not harm this pretty group,
Whose lives are not so frail and feebly wove,
But leased on Nature's loveliness and love.

"'Tis these that free the small entangled fly,
Caught in the venom'd spider's crafty snare ;—
These be the petty surgeons that apply
The healing balams to the wounded hare,
Bedded in bloody fern, no creature's care! —
These be providers for the orphan brood,
Whose tender mother hath been slain in air,
Quitting with gaping bill her darlings' food,
Hard by the verge of her domestic wood.

"'Tis these befriend the timid trembling stag,
When, with a bursting heart beset with fears,
He feels his saving speed begin to flag ;
For then they quench the fatal taint with tears,
And prompt fresh shifts in his alarm'd ears,
So piteously they view all bloody morts ;
Or if the gunner, with his arm, appears,
Like noisy pyes and jays, with harsh reports,
They warn the wild fowl of his deadly sports.

“For these are kindly ministers of nature,
To soothe all covert hurts and dumb distress ;
Pretty they be, and very small of stature,—
For mercy still con-cits with littleness ;—
Wherefore the sum of good is still the less,
And mischief grossest in this world of wrong ;—
So do these charitable dwarfs redress
The tenfold ravages of giants strong,
To whom great malice and great might belong.

“Likewise to them are Poets much beholden
For secret favours in the midnight glooms ;
Brave Spenser quaff'd out of their goblets golden,
And saw their tables spread of prompt mushrooms,
And heard their horns of honeysuckle blooms
Sounding upon the air most soothing soft,
Like humming bees busy about the brooms,—
And glanced this fair queen's witchery full oft,
And in her magic wain soar'd far aloft.

“Nay I myself, though mortal, once was nursed
By fairy gossips, friendly at my birth,
And in my childish ear glib Mab rehearsed
Her breezy travels round our planet's girth,
Telling me wonders of the moon and earth ;
My gramarye at her grave lay I conn'd,
Where Puck hath been convened to make me mirth ;
I have had from Queen Titania tokens fond,
And toy'd with Oberon's permitted wand.

“With figs and plums and Persian dates they fed me,
And delicate eates after my sunset meal,
And took me by my childish hand, and led me
By craggy rocks crested with keeps of steel,
Whose awful bases deep dark woods conceal,
Staining some dead lake with their verdant dyes :
And when the West sparkled at Phœbus’ wheel,
With fairy euphrasy they purged mine eyes,
To let me see their cities in the skies.

“’Twas they first school’d my young imagination
To take its flights like any new-fledged bird,
And show’d the span of winged meditation
Stretch’d wider than things grossly seen or heard.
With sweet swift Ariel how I soar’d and stir’d
The fragrant blooms of spiritual bow’rs !
’Twas they endear’d what I have still preferr’d,
Nature’s blest attributes and balmy pow’rs
Her hills and vales and brooks, sweet birds and flow’rs !

“Wherefore with all true royalty and duty
Will I regard them in my honouring rhyme,
With love for love, and homages to beauty,
And magic thoughts gather’d in night’s cool clime,
With studious verse trancing the dragon Time,
Strong as old Merlin’s necromantic spells ;
So these dear monarchs of the summer’s prime
Shall live unstartled by his dreadful yells,
Till shrill larks warn them to their flowery cells.”

Look how a poison'd man turns livid black,
Drugg'd with a cup of deadly hellebore,
That sets his horrid features all at rack,
So seem'd these words into the ear to pour
Of ghastly Saturn, answering with a roar
Of mortal pain and spite and utmost rage,
Wherewith his grisly arm he raised once more,
And bade the cluster'd sinews all engage,
As if at one fell stroke to wreck an age.

Whereas the blade flash'd on the dinted ground,
Down through his steadfast foe, yet made no scar
On that immortal Shade, or death-like wound;
But Time was long benumb'd, and stood a-jar,
And then with baffled rage took flight afar,
To weep his hurt in some Cimmerian gloom,
Or meaner fames (like mine) to mock and mar,
Or sharp his scythe for royal strokes of doom,
Whetting its edge on some old Cæsar's tomb.

Howbeit he vanish'd in the forest shade,
Distantly heard as if some grumbling pard,
And, like Nymph Echo, to a sound decay'd;—
Meanwhile the fays cluster'd the gracious Bard,
The darling centre of their dear regard:
Besides of sundry dances on the green,
Never was mortal man so brightly starr'd,
Or won such pretty homages, I ween.
“Nod to him, Elves!” cries the melodious queen.

“Nod to him, Elves, and flutter round about him,
And quite enclose him with your pretty crowd,
And touch him lovingly, for that, without him,
The silk-worm now had spun our dreary shroud ;—
But he hath all dispersed Death’s tearful cloud,
And Time’s dread effigy scared quite away :
Bow to him then, as though to me ye bow’d,
And his dear wishes prosper and obey
Wherever love and wit can find a way !

“’Noint him with fairy dew of magic savours,
Shaken from orient buds still pearly wet,
Roses and spicy pinks,—and, of all favours,
Plant in his walks the purple violet,
And meadow-sweet under the edges set,
To mingle breaths with dainty eglantine
And honeysuckles sweet,—nor yet forget
Some pastoral flowery chaplets to entwine,
To vie the thoughts about his brow benign !

“Let no wild things astonish him or fear him,
But tell them all how mild he is of heart,
Till e’en the timid hares go frankly near him,
And eke the dappled does, yet never start ;
Nor shall their fawns into the thickets dart,
Nor wrens forsake their nests among the leaves,
Nor speckled thrushes flutter far apart ;—
But bid the sacred swallow haunt his eaves,
To guard his roof from lightning and from thieves.

“ Or when he goes the nimble squirrel’s visitor,
Let the brown hermit bring his hoarded nuts,
For, tell him, this is Nature’s kind Inquisitor,—
Though man keeps cautious doors that conscience shuts,
For conscious wrong all curious quest rebuts,—
Nor yet shall bees uncase their jealous stings,
However he may watch their straw-built huts ;—
So let him learn the crafts of all small things,
Which he will hint most aptly when he sings.”

Here she leaves off, and with a graceful hand
Waves thrice three splendid circles round his head ;
Which, though deserted by the radiant wand,
Wears still the glory which her waving shed,
Such as erst crown’d the old Apostle’s head,
To show the thoughts, there harbour’d, were divine,
And on immortal contemplations fed :—
Goodly it was to see that glory shine
Around a brow so lofty and benign !—

Goodly it was to see the elfin brood
Contend for kisses of his gentle hand,
That had their mortal enemy withstood,
And stay’d their lives, fast ebbing with the sand.
Long while this strife engaged the pretty band ;
But now bold Chanticleer, from farm to farm,
Challenged the dawn creeping o’er eastern land,
And well the fairies knew that shrill alarm,
Which sounds the knell of every selfish charm.

And soon the rolling mist, that 'gan arise
From plashy mead and undiscover'd stream,
Earth's morning incense to the early skies,
Crept o'er the failing landscape of my dream.
Soon faded then the Phantom of my theme —
A shapeless shade, that fancy disavow'd,
And shrank to nothing in the mist extreme.
Then flew Titania,—and her little crowd,
Like flocking linnets, vanish'd in a crowd.

TO A SLEEPING CHILD.

I.

Oh, 'tis a touching thing, to make one weep,—
A tender infant with its curtain'd eye,
Breathing as it would neither live nor die
With that unchanging countenance of sleep!
As if its silent dream, serene and deep,
Had lined its slumber with a still blue sky
So that the passive cheeks unconscious lie
With no more life than roses—just to keep
The blushes warm, and the mild, odorous breath.
O blossom boy! so calm is thy repose,
So sweet a compromise of life and death,
'Tis pity those fair buds should e'er uncloset
For memory to stain their inward leaf,
Tinging thy dreams with unacquainted grief.

TO A SLEEPING CHILD.

II.

THINE eyelids slept so beauteously, I deem'd
No eyes could wake so beautiful as they :
Thy rosy cheeks in such still slumbers lay,
I love their peacefulness, nor ever dream'd
Of dimples:—for those parted lips so seem'd,
I never thought a smile could sweetlier play,
Nor that so graceful life could chase away
Thy graceful death,—till those blue eyes upheam'd.
Now slumber lies in dimpled eddies drown'd,
And roses bloom more rosily for joy,
And odorous silence ripens into sound,
And fingers move to sound.—All-beauteous boy!
How thou dost waken into smiles, and prove,
If not more lovely, thou art more like Love!

VERSES IN AN ALBUM.

FAR above the hollow
Tempest, and its moan,
Singeth bright Apollo
In his golden zone,—
Cloud doth never shade him,
Nor a storm invade him,
On his joyous throne.

So when I behold me
 In an orb as bright,
 How thy soul doth fold me
 In its throne of light !
 Sorrow never paineth,
 Nor a care attaineth,
 To that blessed height.



THE FORGE.

A ROMANCE OF THE IRON AGE.



PART I.

LIKE a dead man gone to his shroud,
 The sun has sunk in a coppery cloud,
 And the wind is rising squally and loud
 With many a stormy token,—
 Playing a wild funereal air,
 Through the branches bleak, bereaved, and bare,
 To the dead leaves dancing here and there—
 In short if the truth were spoken,
 It's an ugly night for anywhere,
 But an awful one for the Brocken

For oh ! to stop
 On that mountain top,
 After the dews of evening drop,
 Is always a dreary folic—

Then what must it be when nature groans,
And the very mountain murmurs and moans
As if it writhed with the cholic—
With other strange supernatural tones,
From wood, and water, and echoing stones,
Not to forget unburied bones—
In a region so diabolic!

A place where he whom we call Old Scratch,
By help of his Witches—a precious batch—
Gives midnight concerts and sermons,
In a Pulpit and Orchestra built to match,
A plot right worthy of him to hatch,
And well adapted, he knows, to catch
The musical, mystical Germans!

However it's quite
As wild a night
As ever was known on that sinister height
Since the Demon-Dance was morrised—
The earth is dark, and the sky is scowling,
And the blast through the pines is howling and growling
As if a thousand wolves were prowling
About in the old BLACK FOREST!

Madly, sadly, the Tempest raves
Through the narrow gullies and hollow caves,
And bursts on the rocks in windy waves,

Like the billows that roar
On a gusty shore
Mourning over the mariners' graves—
Nay, more like a frantic lamentation
From a howling set
Of demons met
To wake a dead relation.

Badly, madly, the vapours fly
Over the dark distracted sky,
At a pace that no pen can paint!
Black and vague like the shadows of dreams,
Scudding over the moon that seems,
Shorn of half her usual beams,
As pale as if she would faint!

The lightning flashes,
The thunder crashes,
The trees encounter with horrible clashes,
While rolling up from marish and bog,
Rank and rich,
As from Stygian ditch,
Rises a foul sulphureous fog,
Hinting that Satan himself is agog,—
But leaving at once his heroical pitch,
The night is a very bad night in which
You wouldn't turn out a dog.

Yet ONE there is abroad in the storm,
And whenever by chance
The moon gets a glance,
She spies the Traveller's lonely form,
Walking, leaping, striding along,
As none can do but the super-strong ;
And flapping his arms to keep him warm,
For the breeze from the North is a regular starver,
And to tell the truth,
More keen, in sooth,
And cutting than any German carver !

However, no time it is to lag,
And on he scrambles from crag to crag,
Like one determined never to flag—
Now weathers a block
Of jutting rock,
With hardly room for a toe to wag ;
But holding on by a timber snag,
That looks like the arm of a friendly hag ;
Then stooping under a drooping bough,
Or leaping over some horrid chasm,
Enough to give any heart a spasm !
And sinking down a precipice now,
Keeping his feet the Deuce knows how,
In spots whence all creatures would keep aloof,
Except the Goat, with his cloven hoof,
Who clings to the shallowest ledge as if
He grew like the weed on the face of the cliff !

So down, still down, the Traveller goes,
Safe as the Chamois amid his snows,
Though fiercer than ever the hurricane blows,
And round him eddy, with whirl and whizz,
Tornadoes of hail, and sleet, and rain,
Enough to bewilder a weaker brain,
Or blanch any other visage than his,
Which spite of lightning, thunder, and hail,
The blinding sleet and the freezing gale,
And the horrid abyss,
If his foot should miss,
Instead of tending at all to pale,
Like cheeks that feel the chill of affright—
Remains the very reverse of white!

His heart is granite—his iron nerve
Feels no convulsive twitches;
And as to his foot, it does not swerve,
Tho' the Screech-Owls are flitting about him that serve
For parrots to Brocken Witches!

Nay, full in his very path he spies
The gleam of the Were Wolf's horrid eyes;
But if his members quiver—
It is not for *that*—no, it is not for *that*—
Nor rat,
Nor cat,
As black as your hat.

Nor the snake that hiss'd, nor the toad that spat,
Nor glimmering candles of dead men's fat,
Nor even the flap of the Vampire Bat,
No anserine skin would rise thereat,
It's the cold that makes *Him* shiver !

So down, still down, through gully and glen,
Never trodden by foot of men,
Past the Eagle's nest and the She-Wolf's den,
Never caring a jot how steep
Or how narrow the track he has to keep,
Or how wide and deep
An abyss to leap,
Or what may fly, or walk, or creep,
Down he hurries through darkness and storm
Flapping his arms to keep him warm—
Till threading many a pass abhorrent,
At last he reaches the mountain gorge,
And takes a path along by a torrent—
The very identical path, by St. George !
Down which young Fridolin went to the Forge,
With a message meant for his own death-warrant !

Young Fridolin; young Fridolin !
So free from sauce, and sloth, and sin,
The best of pages
Whatever their ages,
Since first that singular fashion came in—

Not he like those modern and idle young gluttons
With little jackets, so smart and spruce,
Of Lincoln green, sky-blue, or puce—
A little gold lace you may introduce—
Very showy, but as for use,
Not worth so many buttons!

Young Fridolin; young Fridolin!
Of his duty so true a fulfiller—
But here we need no farther go
For whosoever desires the Tale to know,
May read it all in Schiller.

Faster now the Traveller speeds,
Whither his guiding beacon leads,
For by yonder glare
In the murky air,
He knows that the Eisen Hutte is there!
With its sooty Cyclops, savage and grim,
Hosts, a guest had better forbear,
Whose thoughts are set upon dainty fare—
But stiff with cold in every limb,
The Furnace Fire is the bait for *Him*!
Faster and faster still he goes,
Whilst redder and redder the Welkin glows,
And the lowest clouds that scud in the sky
Get crimson fringes in flitting by.
Till lo! amid the lurid light,
The darkest object intensely dark,

Just where the bright is intensely bright,
The Forge, the Forge itself is in sight,
Like the pitch-black hull of a burning bark,
With volleying smoke, and many a spark,
Vomiting fire, red, yellow, and white!

Restless, quivering tongues of flame!
Heavenward striving still to go,
While others, reversed in the stream below,
Seem seeking a place we will not name,
But well that Traveller knows the same,
Who stops and stands,
So rubbing his hands,
And snuffing the rare
Perfumes in the air,
For old familiar odours are there,
And then direct by the shortest cut,
Like Alpine Marmot, whom neither rut,
Rivers, rocks, nor thickets rebut,
Makes his way to the blazing hut!

PART II.

Idly watching the Furnace-flames,
The men of the stithy
Are in their smithy,
Brutal monsters, with bulky frames,
Beings Humanity scarcely claims,

But hybrids rather of demon race,
Unbless'd by the holy rite of grace,
Who never had gone by Christian names,
Mark, or Matthew, Peter, or James—
Naked, foul, unshorn, unkempt,
From touch of natural shame exempt,
'Things of which Delirium has dreamt—
But wherefore dwell on these verbal sketches,
When faced with frightful truth and vigour,
Costume, attitude, face, and figure,
Retsch has drawn the very wretches!

However, there they lounge about,
The grim, gigantic fellows,
Hardly hearing the storm without,
That makes so very dreadful a rout,
For the constant roar
From the furnace door,
And the blast of the monstrous bellows!

Oh, what a scene
That Forge had been
For Salvator Rosa's study!
With wall, and beam, and post, and pin,
And those ruffianly creatures, like Shapes of Sin,
Hair, and eyes, and rusty skin,
Illumed by a light so ruddy
The Hut, and whatever there is therein.
Looks either red-hot or bloody!

And, oh! to hear the frequent burst
Of strange, extravagant laughter,
Harsh and hoarse,
And resounding perforce
From echoing roof and rafter!
Though curses, the worst
That ever were curst,
And threats that Cain invented the first,
Come growling the instant after!
But again the livelier peal is rung,
For the Smith, hight Salamander,
In the jargon of some ~~T~~anic tongue,
Elsewhere never said or sung,
With the voice of a Stentor in joke has flung
Some cumbrous sort
Of sledge-hammer retort
At Red Beard the crew's commander.
Some frightful jest—who knows how wild,
Or obscene, from a monster so defiled,
And a horrible mouth, of such extent,
From flapping ear to ear it went,
And show'd such tusks whenever it smiled—
The very mouth to devour a child!
But fair or foul the jest gives birth
To another bellow of demon mirth,
That far outroars the weather,
As if all the Hyænas that prowl the earth
Had clubb'd their laughs together.

And lo! In the middle of all the din,
Not seeming to care a single pin,
For a prospect so volcanic,
A Stranger steps abruptly in,
Of an aspect rather Satanic:
And he looks with a grin, at those Cyclops
Who stare and grin again at him
With wondrous little panic.

Then up to the Furnace the stranger goes,
Eager to thaw his ears and nose,
And warm his frozen fingers and toes—
While each succeeding minute,
Hotter and hotter the Smithy grows,
And seems to declare,
By a fiercer glare,
On wall, roof, floor, and everywhere,
It knows the devil is in it!

Still not a word
Is uttered or heard,
But the beetle-brow'd Foreman nods and winks,
Much as a shaggy old Lion blinks,
And makes a shift
To impart his drift
To a smoky brother, who joining the links,
Hints to the third the thing he thinks;

And whatever it be,
They all agree
In smiling with faces full of glee,
As if about to enjoy High Jinks.

What sort of tricks they mean to play
By way of diversion, who can say,
Of such ferocious and barbarous folk,
Who chuckled, indeed, and never spoke
Of burning Robert the Jüger to coke,
Except as a capital practical joke !

Who never thought of Mercy, or heard her,
Or any gentle emotion felt ;
But hard as the iron they had to melt,
Sported with Danger and romp'd with Murder!

Meanwhile the Stranger—
The Brocken Ranger,
Besides another and hotter post,
That renders him not averse to a roast,—
Creeping into the Furnace almost,
Has made himself as warm as a toast—

When, unsuspecting of any danger,
And least of all of any such maggot,
As treating his body like a faggot,
All at once he is seized and shoven
In pastime cruel,
Like so much fuel,
Headlong into the blazing oven !

In he goes! with a frightful shout
Mock'd by the rugged ruffianly band,
As round the Furnace mouth they stand,
Bar, and shovel, and ladle in hand,
To hinder their Butt from crawling out,
Who making one fierce attempt, but vain,
Receives such a blow
From Red-Beard's crow
As crashes the skull and gashes the brain,
And blind, and dizzy, and stunn'd with pain,
With merely an interjectional "oh!"
Back he rolls in the flames again.

"Ha! Ha! Ho! Ho!" That second fall
Seems the very best joke of all,
To judge by the roar,
Twice as loud as before,
That fills the Hut, from the roof to the floor,
And flies a league or two out of the door
Up the mountain and over the moor,—
But scarcely the jolly echoes they wake
Have well begun
To take up the fun,
Ere the shaggy Felons have cause to quake,
And begin to feel that the deed they have done,
Instead of being a pleasant one,
Was a very great error—and no mistake.

For why?—in lieu
Of its former hue,
So natural, warm, and florid,
The Furnace burns of a brimstone blue,
And instead of the *couleur de rose* it threw,
With a cooler reflection,—justly due—
Exhibits each of the Pagan crew,
Livid, ghastly, and horrid!

But vainly they close their guilty eyes
Against prophetic fears;
Or with hard and horny palms devise
To dam their enormous ears—
There are sounds in the air,
Not here or there,
Irresistible voices everywhere,
No bulwarks can ever rebut,
And to match the screams,
Tremendous gleams,
Of Horrors that like the phantoms of dreams
They see with their eyelids shut!
For awful coveys of terrible things,
With forked tongues and venomous stings,
On hagweed, broomsticks, and leathern wings,
Are hovering round the Hut!
Shapes, that within the focus bright

Of the Forge, are like shadows and blots;
But farther off, in the shades of night,
Clothed with their own phosphoric light,
Are seen in the darkest spots.

Sounds! that fill the air with noises,
Strange and indescribable voices,
From Hags, in a diabolical clatter—
Cats that spit curses, and apes that chatter
Scraps of cabalistical matter—

Owls that screech, and dogs that yell—
Skeleton hounds that will never be fatter—

All the domestic tribes of Hell,
Shrieking for flesh to tear and tatter,

Bones to shatter,

And limb to scatter,

And who it is that must furnish the latter

Those blue-looking Men know well!

Those blue-looking men that huddle together,

For all their sturdy limbs and thews,

Their unshorn locks, like Nazarene Jews,

And buffalo beards, and hides of leather,

Huddled all in a heap together,

Like timid lamb, and ewe, and wether,

And as females say,

In a similar way,

Fit for knocking down with a feather!

In and out, in and out,
 The gathering goblins hover about,
 Ev'ry minute augmenting the rout;
 For like a spell
 The unearthly smell
 That fumes from the Furnace, chimney and mouth,
 Draws them in - an infernal legion—
 From East, and West, and North, and South,
 Like carrion birds from every region,
 Till not a yard square
 Of the sickling air
 But has a Demon or two for its share
 Breathing fury, woe, and despair.
 Never, never was such a sight:
 It beats the very Walpurgis Night
 Displayed in the story of Doctor Faustus,
 For the scene to describe
 Of the awful tribe,
 If we were *two* Goethe's, would quite exhaust us!
 Suffice it, amid that dreary swarm,
 There musters each foul repulsive form
 That ever a fancy overwound
 Begot in its worst delirium;
 Besides some others of monstrous size,
 Never before revealed to eyes,
 Of the genus *Megatherium*!
 Meanwhile the demons, filthy and foul,
 Gorgon, Chimera, Harpy, and Ghoul,

Are not contented to jibber and howl
As a dirge for their late commander;
But one of the bevy—witch or wizard,
Disguised as a monstrous flying lizard,
Springs on the grisly Salamander,
Who stoutly fights, and struggles, and kicks,
And tries the best of his wrestling tricks,
No paltry strife,
But for life, dear life,

But the ruthless talons refuse to unfix,
Till far beyond a surgical case,
With startling eyes, and black in the face,
Down he tumbles as dead as bricks!

A pretty sight for his mates to view!
Those cheap murderers looking so blue,
And for him above all,
Red-bearded and tall,
With whom, at that very particular nick,
There is such an unlucky crow to pick,
As the one of iron did the trick
In a recent bloody affair—
No wonder feeling a little sick,
With pulses beating uncommonly quick,
And breath he never found so thick,
He longs for the open air!

Three paces, or four,
And he gains the door;

But ere he accomplishes one,
The sound of a blow comes heavy and dull,
And clasping his fingers round his skull—
However the deed was done,
That gave him that florid
Red gash on the forehead—
With a roll of the eye balls perfectly horrid,
There's a tremulous quiver,
The last death-shiver,
And Red-Beard's course is run!

Halloo! Halloo!

They have done for two!
But a heavyish job remains to do!
For yonder, sledge and shovel in hand,
Like elder Sons of Giant Despair,
A couple of Cyclops make a stand,
And fiercely hammering here and there,
Keep at bay the Powers of Air—
But desperation is all in vain!—
They faint—they choke,
For the sulphurous smoke
Is poisoning heart, and lung, and brain,
They reel, they sink they gasp, they smother,
One for a moment survives his brother,
Then rolls a corpse across the other!
Hulloo! Hulloo!
And Hullabaloo!
There is only one more thing to do—

Ald seized by beak, and talon, and claw,
 Bony hand, and hairy paw,
 Yea, crooked horn, and tusky jaw,
 The four huge Bodies are haul'd and shoven
 Each after each in the roaring oven !

* * * * *
 * * * * *

That Eisen Hütte is standing still,
 Go to the Hartz whenever you will,
 And there it is beside a hill,
 And a rapid stream that turns many a mill ;
 The self-same Forge,—you'll know it at sight!—
 Casting upward, day and night,
 Flames of red, and yellow, and white !

Ay, half a mile from the mountain gorge,
 There it is, the famous Forge,
 With its Furnace,—the same that blazed of yore,—
 Hugely fed with fuel and ore ;
 But ever since that tremendous Revel,
 Whatever Iron is melted therein,—
 As Travellers know who have been to Berlin—
 Is all as black as the Devil !

A SONG FOR THE MILLION.

ON WHILLM'S METHOD.

THERE'S a Music aloft in the air
As if Cherubs were humming a song,
Now it's high, now it's low, here and there,
There's a Harmony floating along!
While the steeples are loud in their joy,
To the tune of the bells' ring-a-ding,
Let us chime in a peal, one and all,
For we all should be able to sing
Hullabhaloo!

We are Chartists, Destructives and rogues,
We are Radicals, Tories, and Whigs,
We are Churchman, Dissenters, what not,
We are asses, cubs, monkeys and pigs,
But in spite of the slanderous names
Partisans on each other will sing,
Tho' in concord we cannot agree,
Yet we all in a chorus shall sing
Hullabhaloo!

We may not have a happy New Year,
Be perplex'd by all possible ills---
Find the bread and the meat very dear,
And be troubl'd with very *hard bills*---

Yet like linnets, cock-robins and wrens,
 Larks, and nightingales joyous in Spring,
 Or the finches saluting their hens,
 Sure we all should be able to sing

Hullahbaloo!

We have made a Lilliput purse,
 And the change in the purse very small,
 And our notes may not pass at the Bank,
 But they're current at Banco Hall!
 Then a fig for foul weather and fogs!
 And whatever Misfortune may bring,
 If we go to the dogs—like the dogs
 In a pack we are able to sing

Hullahbaloo!

Though the coat may be worn with a ladge—
 Or the kerchief no prize for a prig—
 Or the shirt never sent to the wash—
 There's the Gamut for little and big!
 O then come rich and poor, young and old,
 For of course it's a very fine thing,
 Spite of Misery, Hunger, and cold,
 That we all are so able to sing

Hullahbaloo!

There are Demons to worry the rich,
 There are monsters to torture the poor,
 There's the Worm that will gnaw at the heart,
 There's the Wolf that will come to the door!

A SONG FOR THE MILLION.

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We may even be short of the cash
For the tax to a queen or a king,
And the broker may sell off our beds,
But we still shall be able to sing

Hullahbaloo!

There's Con-sumption to wither the weak,
There are fevers that humble the stout—
A disease may be rife with the young,
Or a pestilence walking about—
Desolation may visit our hives,
And old Death's metaphorical sting
May dispose of the dearest of wives,
But we all shall be able to sing

Hullahbaloo!

We may farm at a very high rent,
And with guano manure an inch deep,
We may sow, whether broadcast or drill,
And have only the whirlwind to reap,
All our corn may be spoked in the ear,
And our barns be ignited by Swing,
And our sheep may die off with the rot,
But we all shall be able to sing

Hullahbaloo!

Our acquaintance may cut us direct,
Even Love may become rather cold,
And a friend of our earlier years
May look shy at the coat that is old;

We may not have a twig or a straw,
 Not a reed where affection may cling,
 Not a dog for our love, or a cat,
 But we still shall be able to sing

Hullahbaloo!

Some are pallid with watching and want,
 Some are burning with blushes of shame;
 Some have lost all they had in the world,
 And are bankrupt in honour and name.
 Some have wasted a fortune in trade—
 And by going at all in the ring,
 Some have lost even a corner of the House;
 But they all will be able to sing

Hullahbaloo!

Some are down to the street of Despair,
 And afraid of the contact of life
 That they are in of leaps over a bridge,
 Of the pistol, rope, poison and knife;
 To the Temples of Ruins and Shame
 We are not going up in a trice;
 And to sons, even Heaven seems black,
 But we all shall be able to sing

Hullahbaloo!

We may give up the struggle with Care,
 And the last little hope that would stop,
 We may survive with a Giant Despair—
 From the very blue sky we may drop,

By some sudden bewildering blow
Stricken down like a bird on the wing,—
Or with hearts breaking surely and slow—
But we all shall be able to sing

Hullahbaloo!

Oh! no matter how wretched we be,
How ill-lodg'd, or ill clad, or ill-fed,
And with only one tile for a roof,—
That we cary about on the head:
We may creak with a very bad cold,
Or a throat that's a-day as a ring,—
There's the Street or the Stage for us all,
For we all shall be able to sing

Hullahbaloo!

There's a Music aloft in the air,
As if Cherubs were humming a song
Now it's high, now it's low, here and there,
'There's a Harmony floating along!
While the steeples are loud in their joy,
To the tune of the bells' ring-a-ding,
Let us chime in a peal one and all,
For we all should be able to sing

Hullahbaloo!



COME, TAKE THY PENCIL.

"COME, take thy pencil—paint my love
 More tender than most tender dove;
 Suffuse her cheeks with that warm glow
 Would fain on lover hope bestow;
 And make it frequent *go and come*
 Back to and from its sighful home.
 Lay on her *tongue the tone of truth*,
 The Vesper Hymn of virgin youth.
 She loves each ev'ning's praise,
 To lisp to Sol's declining rays;
 And hide that song from vulgar men
 Within her own most hallow'd den.
 By double row of pillars, chaste
 As Dawn on the *morning sea*, [8c.].
 From those lips let *adorable* breathe;
 Round them *all my music breathe*.
 In her fond voluptuous clasp
 Mould a dimple, hearts to *gin*;
 And make thy magic heart appear
 A heartsease smile behind each tear [8c.].
 Give to her feet the airy motion
 Of sunbeams tumbling on the ocean;
 Lay her white fingers on a harp
 Of gold, the power of gloom to warp.
 And *if thou canst*, in its warm nest
 Paint, paint the heart beneath the breast;

Make visible its million springs,
Nor snap one of its thousand strings;
Depict it in a tear-wove guise
Floating upon a sea of sighs,
Its hundred ears inclined to one
Sweet tale of love, ' &c., &c.

TO CELIA.

Old fictions say that Love hath eyes
Yet sees, unhappy boy ' with none ;
Blind as the night ' but fiction lies,
For Love doth always see with one.

To one our graces all unveil,
To one our flaws are all exposed ;
But when with tenderness we hail,
He smiles, and keeps the curtain closed.

But when he's scorned, abused, estranged,
He opens the eye of evil ken,
And all his angel friends are changed
To demons—and are hated then !

Yet once it happ'd that, semi blind,
He met thee on a summer day,
And took thee for his mother kind,
And frown'd as he was push'd away.

But still he saw thee shine the same,
 Though he had oped his evil eye,
 And found that nothing but her shame
 Was left to know his mother by!

And ever since that morning sun
 He thinks of thee, and blesses Fate
 That he can look with both on one
 Who hath no uglier line to hate.

SONNET.

TO AN ENTHUSIAST.

Young ardent soul, gifted with fair Nature's truth,
 Spring warmth of heart, and fervour of mind,
 And still a huge true love of all thy kind,
 Spite of the World's cold practice and Time's tooth,—
 For all these gifts, I know not, in fair sooth,
 Whether to give thee joy, or bid thee blind
 Thine eyes with tears,—that thou hast not resign'd
 The passionate fire and fierceness of thy youth:
 For as the current of thy life ebb'd low,
 Gilded by shine of sun or shadow-stain'd,
 Through flow'ry valley or all-wholesome fen,
 Thrice blessed in thy joy, or in thy woe
 Thrice cursed of thy race,—thou art ordain'd
 To share beyond the lot of common men.

THE FORSAKEN.

The dead are in their silent graves,
 And the dew is cold above,
 And the living weep at a sigh,
 Over dust that once was love.

Once I only wept the dead,
 But now the living cause my pain:
 How couldst thou steal me from my tears,
 To leave me to my tears again.

My Mother rests beneath the sod, —
 Her rest is calm and very deep:
 I wish'd that she could see our loves, —
 But now I gladden in her sleep.

Last night unbound my raven locks,
 The morning saw them turn'd to gray,
 Once they were black and well beloved,
 But thou art changed — and so are they!

The useless lock I gave thee once,
 To gaze upon and think of me,
 Was ta'en with smiles — but this was torn
 In sorrow that I send to thee!

SONG.

O LADY, leave thy silken thread
 And flowery tapestry :
 There's living roses on the bush,
 And blossoms on the tree ;
 stoop where thou wilt, thy careless hand
 Some rand' on Lud will meet,
 Thou canst not tread, but thou wilt find
 The daisy at thy feet.

'Tis like the birth of the world,
 When earth was born in bloom ;
 The light : made of many dyes,
 The air : all perfume :
 There's crimson buds, and white and blue—
 The very rainbow flowers
 Have turn'd to blossoms where they fell,
 And sown the earth with flowers.

There's fairy tulips in the east,
 The garden of the sun ;
 The very streams reflect the hues,
 And blossom as they run :
 While Morn opens like a crimson rose,
 Still wet with pearly showers ;
 Then, lady, leave the silken thread
 Thou twinest into flowers !

LINES.

Let us make a heap my dear,
 In our love, of many a year,
 And date it very far away,
 On a bright clear summer day.
 When the heart was like a sun
 To itself, and falsehood none;
 And the rosy lips a part
 Of the very loving heart,
 And the shining of the eye
 But a sign to know it by;—
 When my faults were all forgiven,
 And my life deserved of Heaven.
 Dearest let us reckon so,
 And love for all that long ago,
 Each absence count a year complete,
 And keep a birthday when we meet.

THE IRISH SCHOOLMASTER.

ALACK! 'tis melancholy theme to think
How Learning doth in rugged states abide,
And, like her bashful owl, obscurely blink,
In pensive glooms and corners, scarcely spied;

Not, as in Founders' Hall and domes of pride,
Served with grave homage, like a tragic queen,
But with one lonely priest compell'd to hide,
In midst of foggy moors and mosses green,
In that clay cabin hight the College of Killeen!

This College looketh South and West also,
Because it hath a cast in windows twain;
Crack and crack'd they be, and wind doth blow
Through transparent holes in every pane,
Which Dan, with many pines, makes whole again
With nether garments, which his thrift doth teach,
To stand for glass, like pomonas, and when rain
Stormeth, he puts "once more unto the breach,"—
Outside and in, that broke, yet so he mendeth each.

And in the midst a little door there is,
Whereon a board that doth congratulate
With painted letters, red as blood I wis,
Thus written: "Chudair token in to Gate:"
And oft, indeed, the inward of that gate,
Most ventriloque, doth utter tender squeak,
And moans of infants that bemoan their fate,
In midst of sounds of Latin, French, and Greek,
Which, all in the Irish tongue, he teacheth them to speak.

For some are meant to right illegal wrongs,
And some for Doctors of Divinitie,
Whom he doth teach to murder the dead tongues,
And soe win academical degree;

But some are bred for service of the sea,
Howbeit, their store of learning is but small,
For mickle waste he counteth it would be
To stock a head with bookish wares at all.
Only to be knocked off by ruthless cannon ball.

Six babes he sways,— some little and some big,
Divided into classes six;— above,
He keeps a parlour boarder, of a pig,
That in the College fareth to and fro,
And picketh up the archers' crumbs below, —
And eke the learned rudiments they scan,
And thus his A, B, C, doth wisely know —
Hereafter to be shown in catavan,
And raise the wonderment of many a learned man.

Alsoe, he schools some tame familiar fowls,
Whereof, above his head, some two or three
Sit darkly squatting, like Minerva's owls,
But on the branches of no living tree,
And overlook the learned family :
While, sometimes, Partlet, from her gloomy perch,
Drops feather on the nose of Dominic,
Meanwhile, with serious eye, he makes research
In leaves of that sour tree of knowledge—now a birch,

No chair he hath, the awful Pedagogue,
Such as would magisteral hamper bed,
But sitteth lowly on a beechen leg,
Secure in high authority and dread :

Large, as a dome for learning, seems his head,
 And like Apollo's, all beset with rays,
 Because his locks are so unkempt and red,
 And stand abroad in many several ways;
 No laurel crown he wears, howbeit his cap is baize,

And, underneath, a pair of shaggy brows
 O'erhang as many eyes of gizzard hue,
 That inward gildet of a lowl, which shows
 A mongrel tint, that is no brow nor blue,
 His nose, — it is a coal to the view;
 Well nourished with the Ian Uaen,—
 For much he loves his native mountain dew;—
 But to depict the dye would lack, I ween,
 A bottle-red, in tincture, as well as bottle-green.

As for his coat, it is a jerkin short
 As Spenser had, ere he composed his Tales;
 But underneath he hath no vest, nor aught,
 So that the wind his very breast assails;
 Below, he wears the better part of males,
 Of crimson shawl, but congealed at the knee;
 Thence further down the narrow red prevails,
 Of his own native fleecy hosiery;
 Two sandals, without soles, complete his cap-a-pie.

Useless, for dignity, he never doth lap
 His function in a magisterial gown,
 That shows more countries in it than a map,—
 Blue tinct, and red, and green, and russet-brown,

Besides some blots, standing for country-town ;
And eke some rents, for streams and rivers wide ;
But sometimes, hapful when he looks adown,
He turns the garment of the other side,
Hopeful that so the holes may never be espied !

And soe he sits, amidst the little pack,
That look for shady or for sunny noon,
Within his v'age, like an almanack - -
His quiet smile for telling precious boon ;
But when his mouth droops down, like rainy moon,
With horrid chill each little heart unwarms,
Knowing, that infant show'rs will follow soon,
And with foreboding, of near woe, fit and down,
They sit, like timid hares, all trembling on their haunches

Ah ! luckless wight, who cannot then repeat
"Conduoy Colloquy," - or "Ki, Ka, Kod,"—
Full soon his tears shall make his turfy seat
More sodden, than already made of sod,
For Dm shall whip him with the word of God,—
Severe by rule, and not by rote or mud,
He never spoils the child, and never uses the rod,
But spoils the rod and never spares the child,
And soe with holy rule down he is reconciled.

But surely the just sky wld never wink
At men who take delight in child's bathroo,
And stripe the nether-melchin like a pink
Or tender hyacinth, inscribed with woe ;

Such bloody Pedagogues, when they shall know,
 By useless birches, that forlorn recess,
 Which is no holiday, in Pit below,
 Will hell not seem design'd for their distress—
 A melancholy place, that is all bottomlesse?

Yet would the Muse not chide the wholesome use
 Of needful discipline, in due degree.
 Devoid of sway, what wrongs will time produce
 Whene'er the twig untrain'd grows up a tree,
 This shall a Canker, that a Whore-boy be,
 Ferocious leaders of a roving band,
 And Learning's help be used for infamy,
 By lawless clerks that with their bloody hands,
 In murder'd English write Rock's murderous commands.

But ah! what shrilly cry doth now alarm
 The scolding hawks that do ed up on the beam,
 All sudden fluttering from the brandish'd arm,
 And cackling chorus with a human scream;
 Meanwhile, the scourge plies that unkindly seam
 In Phelim's brogues, which bares his naked skin,
 Like traitor gap in warlike fort, I deem,
 That falsely lets the hero's besieger in,
 Nor seeks the Pedagogue by other course to win.

No parent dear he hath to meet his cries;—
 Ah! his parent dear is far aloof,
 And deep in Seven-Dial cellar lies,
 Killed by kind carder-play, or gin of proof,

Or climbeth, catwise, on some London roof,
 Singing, perchance, a lay of Erin's Isle,
 Or, whilst he labours, weaves a fancy-woof,
 Dreaming he sees his home — his Pádraig's smile;
 Ah me! that luckless imp, who weepeth all the while!

Ah! who can paint that fond and heavy time,
 When first the school-child in Parnoy's train,
 And mounts her rattle-steps, enticed to climb,
 Like sooty imp, by deep posterior pain,
 From bloody twig, and else that Indian cane,
 Wherein, ere long, she'd pierce death,
 For this, the while one scapling's bruises drain,
 Another weepeth over dabbled fall,
 Always upon the heel, yet never to be well!

Anon a third, — for his delicious root,
 Late revis'd from his rooth by elder chit,
 So soon is hum in violence of rot,
 So hardly is the humless later bit!
 Meanwhile, the tyrant, with untimely wit
 And mouthing face, derides the small one's moan,
 Who, all lamenting for his loss, doth sit,
 Alack, — mischance comes seldom times alone,
 But aye the worried dog must rue more curs than one.

For lo! the Pedagogue, with sudden drub,
 Smites his scald head, that is already sore, —
 (Superfluous wound, — such is Mr Fortune's rub)
 Who stighly makes answer with redoubled roar,

And sheds salt tears twice faster than before;
 That still with backward fist he strives to dry;
 Washing with brackish moisture, o'er and o'er,
 His muddy cheek, that grows more foul thereby,
 Till all his rainy face looks grim as rainy sky.

So Donny that of noise, obtains a peace,
 And with his natural mutterer hush,
 His new distress, bids former pines cease,
 Like tears dried up with rugg'd huckaback,
 That set the moulded clods all swart;
 Yet soon the child becomes new and shine
 Even as though he were the sun at slack,
 For grief and loss he leaves way to a line,
 This keeps, and his dear eyes, your duty soild in brine.

Now all is but a dead water looking reformed,
 The Donny lay open the barred page;
 (So he it call'd though he doth compound
 Without a look) both Greek and Latin sage,
 Now tell us he of Rome's race in last age,
 How Remulus was bred in savage wood,
 By wet-nurse wolf, devoid of wolfish rage;
 And laid foundations to the walls of mud,
 But watered it, alas! with warm fraternal blood.

Anon he turns to that Homeric war,
 How Troy was sieged like Londonderry town;
 And of our Achil's seat in panting-car,
 Dragged mighty Hector with a bloody crown;

And eke the bard, that sung of their renown,
In garb of Greece most beggar-like and torn,
He paints, with eady, wandering up and down;
Because, at once, in seven cities born,
And so, of parish rights, was, all his days, forlorn.

Anon, through old Mythology he goes,
Of gods and fables, and all their pedantries,
But shuns their servidous fictions, and shows
How Plato wise, and Cleverly of Socrates,
Confess'd not to those leather shoes and shoes;
But thro' the clouds of the Olympian cope
Beheld St. Peter, with his holy keys,
And own'd their love was caught and bow'd to Pope,
While all their pulblind race in foggy mist had strove.

From such quaint theories he turns, at last, aside,
To new philosophies, that still are green,
And shows what rail-roads have been track'd to guide
The wheels of great political machine;
If English corn should grow abroad, I ween,
And gold be made of gold, or paper sheet;
How many pigs be born to each spalpeen;
And ah! how man shall thrive beyond his meat,—
With twenty souls alive, to one square sod of peat!

Here, he makes end; and all the fry of youth,
That stood around with serious look intense,
Close up again their gaping eyes and mouth,
Which they had op'n'd to his eloquence,

As if their hearing were a threefold sense.
 But now the current of his words is done,
 And whether any fruits shall spring from thence,
 In future time, with any mother's son!—
 It is a thing, God wot! that can be told by none.

Now by the creeping shadows of the noon,
 The hour is come to lay aside their lore;
 The cheerful Pedagogue perceives it soon,
 And cries, "Begone!" unto the imps,—and four
 Snatch their two legs and struggle for the door,—
 Like ardent spirits vented from a cask,
 All blithe and frolicsome, but leave two more,
 With Ready made Verse for a reward.
 To weep, whilst all their mates in merry saunter task

Like spectating P'lim, in the warder's seat,
 With tender moss so sleekly overgrown,
 That doth not hurt, but at his sole sole unshod,
 So soothingly kind is firm to me—well
 And one, at Flare and He and plays all alone,—
 For Phelim is gone to tend his step-dame's cow;
 Ah! Phelim's step-dame is a canker'd crone!
 Whilst other twain play at an Irish row,
 And, with shillalah snarl, break o'er another's brow!

But careful Dominie, with ceaseless thrift,
 Now changeth terra for rural hoe;
 But, first of all, with tender hand doth shift
 His college gown, because of solar glow,

And hangs it on a bush, to scare the crow :
 Meanwhile, he plants in earth the dappled bean,
 Or trains the young potatoes all a-row,
 Or plucks the fragrant leek for pottage green,
 With that crisp curly herb, call'd Kale in Aberdeen.

And so he wisely spends the fruitful hours,
 Linked each to each by Love, like a bee,
 Or rules in Learning's hall, or tuns her bow'rs ;—
 Would there were many more such wights as he,
 To sway each capital academy
 Of Cam and Isis ; nor, ah ! that each
 There dwells, I wot, some do each Dominic,
 That does no good in wool, nor yet doth in a hie,
 But wears a floppy head, and talks in flow'ry speech !

 BALLAD.

It was not in the Winter
 Our loving lot was set ;
 It was the Time of Roses, —
 We pluck'd them as we pass'd ;
 That churlish season never frown'd
 On early lovers yet : —
 Oh, no — the world was newly crown'd
 With flowers when first we met !

"Twas twilight, and I bade you go,
 But still you held me fast;
 It was the Time of Roses, —
 We pluck'd them as we pass'd. —

What else could peer thy glowing cheek,
 That seems to glow to stud?
 And when I ad. d the life of Love,
 You snatch'd a Javan's bud,

And oped it to the duty rose,
 Still glowing to the last. —
 It was the Time of Roses,
 We pluck'd them as we pass'd!



STANZAS TO TOM WOODGATE.

OF HASTINGS.

Tom; are you still within the land
 Of livers - still on Hasting's sand,
 Or roaming on the waves?
 Or heave me hollow o'er you rolled,
 Jealous that earth should lap so bold
 A seamen in her graves?

On land the rushlight lives of men
Go out but slowly; nine in ten,
By tedious long decline—
Not so the jolly sailor sinks,
Who founders in the wave, and drinks
The apoplectic brine.

Ay, while I write, mayhap your head
Is sleeping on a cushioned bed—
I hope 'tis far from trouble—
With peevish eye;—your room
Beset with insects, not your own
And corals at your tooth!

Still does the Chance pursue the chance
The main all-out, the Aidant dance
In safety on the tide?
Still flies that sign of my good-will
A little *bunting* thing— but still
To thee a flag of pride?

Does that hard, honest head now clasp
The tiller in its careful grasp—
With every summer breeze
When ladies sail, in lady-boat
Or, tug the oar, a gondola
On smooth Macadam sea?

Or are you where the flounders keep,
 Some dozen long fathoms deep,
 Where sand and shells abound—
 With some old Triton on your chest,
 And twelve grave mermen for a 'quest,
 To find that you are—drown'd?

Swift is the wave, and apt to bring
 A sudden doom—perchance I sing
 A mere funeral dirge;
 You have endured the worst of it
 And are—the same in death or life—
 A good man to the main.

Oh, no!—I hear the old brown eye
 Still winks as clear, and floods, and dries;
 That still the brown old hooves
 Are specking brine up—pumps and dries!—
 Your tooth still full o' ocean weed,
 Or Indian— which you choose.

I like you, Tom! and in the days
 Give honest worth its best praise,
 No puff at honour's cost;
 For though you met these words of mine,
 All letter-learning was a line
 You, somehow, never cross'd!

Mayhap we ne'er shall meet again,
Except on that Pacific main,
Beyond this planet's brink ;
Yet, as we erst have braved the weather,
Still may we float awhile together,
As comrades on this indolent sea !

Many a scudding gale we've had
Together, and my gallant lad
Some perils we have passed ;
When huge and black the wave career'd,
And oft the giant surge appear'd
The master of our mast ;—

'Twas thy example taught me how
To climb the billow's hoary brow,
Or cleave the raging heap --
To bound along the ocean wild,
With danger - only as a child
The waters rock'd to sleep,

Oh, who can tell that brave delight,
To see the hissing wave in night
Come rampant like a snake!
To leap his horrid crest and feast
One's eye upon the briny bear,
Left couchant in the wake !

The simple shepherd's love is still
 To bask upon a sunny hill,
 The herd man roams the vale —
 With both their fancies I agree;
 Be mine the swelling, seeping sea,
 That is both hill and dale!

I yearn for that brisk play — I yearn
 To feel the wave from stern to stern
 Uplift the plough in the sea,
 That merry romp we used to make
 On board the "Glorious" of the Throce,
 The ocean "bow and back!"

I long to feel the steady gale
 That bids the brown distaff sail —
 The seas in with the wind,
 My thought, like any hollow bell,
 Keeps rocking in my ear at ebb and
 Of wave against the land!

It is no fable — that old sea
 Of yore! — see the white-capped main
 Bringing — and I sigh!
 My heart is almost once inclined
 To seaward — and I seem to find
 The waters in my eye!

Methinks I see the shining beach ;
 The merry waves, each after each,
 Rebounding o'er the flints ;
 I spy the grim preventive spy !
 'The jolly boatman standing nigh !
 The maids in morning chintz !

And there they float - the sailing craft !
 'The sail is up - the wind abaft -
 The bar' is trim and neat.
 'Ats' - 'tis all a cream - a lie !
 A primer pimp is standing by,
 'To haul my mizer sheet.'

My riber dyes adieu to a pier -
 My craft is that of beak & man -
 My sail - let Long men tell !
 Adieu, the wave, the wind, the spray !
 Men - noisous - chatzies - fade away !
 Tom Woodgate, fare thee well !

 AUTUMN.

The Autumn skies are flushed with gold,
 And fair and bright the noon sun ;
 These are but streams of winter cold,
 And painted mists that quench the sun

SERENADE.

In secret boughs no sweet birds sing.
 In secret boughs no bird can shroud ;
 These are but leaves that take to wing,
 And wintry winds that pipe so loud.

'Tis not trees' shade, but cloudy glooms
 That on the cheerless valleys fall.
 The flowers are in their grassy tombs,
 And tears of dew are on them all.

 SEPENADE.

Awake, thou little knownest how
 I wake and passionate watches keep,
 And yet while I adore thee now.
 Methinks thou sleepest in thy sleep.
 'Tis sweet enough to make me weep.
 That tender thought of love and thee,
 That while the world is mused so deep,
 Thy soul's perhaps awake to me !
 Sleep on, sleep on, sweet bride of sleep !
 With golden visions for thy dower,
 While I this midnight vigil keep,
 And bless thee in thy silent bower ;
 To me 'tis sweeter than the power
 Of sleep, and fairy dreams untold,
 That I alone, at this still hour,
 In patient love outwatch the world.

ODE TO THE MOON.

MOTHER of light! how fairly dost thou go
 Over those hoary crests, divinely led!—
 Art thou that huntress of the silver bow,
 Fabled of old? Or rather dost thou tread
 Those cloudy summits thence to gaze below,
 Like the wild Chamois from her Alpine snow,
 Where hunter never climb'd,—secure from dread?
 How many antique fancies have I read
 Of that mild presence! and how many wrought!
 Wondrous and bright,
 Upon the silver light,
 Chasing fair figures with the artist, Thought!

What art thou like?—Sometimes I see thee ride
 A far-bound galley on its perilous way,
 Whilst breezy waves toss up their silvery spray;—
 Sometimes behold thee glide,
 Cluster'd by all thy family of stars,
 Like a lone widow, through the welkin wide,
 Whose pallid cheek the midnight sorrow mars;—
 Sometimes I watch thee on from steep to steep,
 Timidly lighted by thy vestal torch,
 Till in some Latmian cave I see thee creep,
 To catch the young Endymion asleep,—
 Leaving thy splendour at the jagged porch!—

Oh, thou art beautiful, howe'er it be !
Huntress, or Dian, or whatever named ;
And he, the veriest Pagan, that first framed
A silver idol, and ne'er worshipp'd thee !—
It is too late—or thou should'st have my knee—
Too late now for the old Ephesian vows,
And not divine the crescent on thy brows !—
Yet, call thee nothing but the more mild Moon,
 Behind those chestnut boughs,
Casting their dappled shadows at my feet ;
I will be grateful for that simple boon,
In many a thoughtful verse and anthem sweet,
And bless thy dainty face whene'er we meet.

In nights far gone,—ay, far away and dead,—
Before Care-fretted, with a lidless eye,—
I was thy wooer on my little bed,
Letting the early hours of rest go by,
To see thee flood the heaven with milky light,
And feed thy snow-white swans, before I slept ;
For thou wert then purveyor of my dreams,—
Thou wert the fairies' armourer, that kept
Their burnish'd helms, and crowns, and corslets bright,
 Their spears, and glittering mails ;
And ever thou didst spill in winding streams
 Sparkles and midnight gleams,
For fishes to new gloss their argent scales !—

Why sighs?—why creeping tears?—why clasp'd hands?—

Is it to count the boy's expended dow'r?

That fairies since have broke their gifted wands?

That young Delight, like any o'erblown flow'r,

Gave, one by one, its sweet leaves to the ground?—

Why then, fair Moon, for all thou mark'st no hour,

'Thou art a sadder dial to old Time

Than ever I have found

On sunny garden-plot, or moss-grown tow'r,

Motto'd with stern and melancholy rhyme.

Why should I grieve for this?—Oh I must yearn

Whilst 'Time, conspirator with Memory,

Keeps his cold ashes in an ancient urn,

Richly emboss'd with childhood's revelry,

With leaves and cluster'd fruits, and flow'rs eterne,—

(Eternal to the world, though not to me),

Aye there will these brave sports and blossoms be,

The deathless wreath, and undecay'd festoon.

When I am heard within,—

Less than the pallid primrose to the Moon,

That now she watches through a vapour thin.

So let it be:—Before I lived to sigh,

'Thou wert in Avon, and a thousand rills,

Beautiful Orb! and so, wherer I lie

Trodden, thou wilt be gazing from thy hills.

Blest be thy loving light, wherer it spills,

And bless'd thy fair face, O mother mild!

Still shine, the soul of rivers as they run,
Still lend thy lonely lamb to lovers fond,
And blend their plighted shadows into one :—
Still smile at even on the bedded child,
And close his eyelids with thy silver wand !

THE EXILE.

The swallow with summer
Will wing o'er the seas,
The wind that I sigh to
Will visit thy trees.
The ship that it hastens
Thy ports will contain,
But me!—I must never
See England again !

There's many that weep there,
But one weeps alone,
For the tears that are falling
So far from her own ;
So far from thy own, love,
We know not our pain ;
If death is between us,
Or only the main.

When the white cloud reclines
On the verge of the sea,
I fancy the white cliffs,
And dream upon thee ;
But the cloud spreads its wings
To the blue heav'n and flies.
We never shall meet, love,
Except in the skies !

THE SEA OF DEATH.

A FRAGMENT.

———My thought I saw
Life swiftly treading over endless space ;
And, at her foot-print, but a bygone pace,
The ocean Past, which, with increasing wave,
Swallow'd her steps like a pursuing grave.

Sad were **my** thoughts that anchor'd silently
On the dead waters of that passionless sea,
Unstirr'd by any touch of living breath :
Silence hung over it, and drowsy Death,
Like a gorged sea-bird, slept with folded wings
On crowded carcasses—sad passive things
That wore the thin grey surface, like a veil
Over the calmness of their features pale.

And there were spring-faced cherubs that did sleep
Like water-lilies on that motionless deep,
How beautiful! with bright unsuffled hair
On sleek untrieted brows, and eyes that were
Buried in marble tombs, a pale eclipse!
And smile-bedimpled cheeks, and pleasant lips,
Meekly apart, as if the soul intense
Spoke out in dreams of its own innocence:
And so they lay in loveliness, and kept
The birth-night of their peace, that Life e'en wept
With very envy of their happy troat:
For there were neighbor brows scar'd by the brows
Of strife and sorrowing - where Care had set
His crooked autograph, and near'd the jet
Of glossy locks, with hollow eyes forlorn,
And lips that curl'd in bitterness and scorn—
Wretched,—as they had breathed of the world's pain
And so bequeathed it to the world again,
'Through the beholder's heart in lone sighs,
So lay they parmented in torpid light,
Under the pall of a transparent night,
Like solemn apparitions half'd sublime
'To everlasting rest,—and with them Time
Slept, as he sleeps upon the silent face
Of a dark dial in a sunless place.

THE DEPARTURE OF SUMMER.

SUMMER is gone on swallow's wings,
 And Earth has buried all her flowers:
 No more the lark,—the linnet—sings,
 But Silence sits in faded bowers.
 There is a shadow on the plain
 Of Winter's coldy comes a sign,—
 There is in wood a solemn sound
 Of hollow warning, whispered round,
 A Echo in her deep recess
 For once had turned a prophetess.
 Shuddering Autumn's time to list,
 And breathes his fear in sudden sighs,
 With clouded face, and hazel eyes
 That quench themselves, and hide in mist.

Yes, Summer's gone like pageant bright,
 Its glorious days of golden light
 Are gone—the mimic suns that quiver,
 Then melt in 'Time's dark-flowing river
 Gone the sweetly-scented breeze
 That spoke in music to the trees;
 Gone—for damp and chilly breath,
 As if fresh blown o'er marble seas,
 Or newly from the lungs of Death.

Gone its virgin roses' blushes,
 Warm as when Aurora rushes
 Freshly from the god's embrace,
 With all her shame upon her face.
 Old Time hath laid them in the mould;
 Sure he is blind as well as old,
 Whose hand relentless never spares
 Young cheeks so beauty-bright as theirs!
 Gone are the flame-eyed lovers now
 From where so blushing-blest they tartied
 Under the hawthorn's blossom-bough,
 Gone; for Day and Night are married.
 All the light of love is fled:—
 Alas! that negro breasts should hide
 The lips that were so rosy red,
 At morning and at even-tide!

Delightful Summer! then adieu
 Till thou shalt visit us anew:
 But who without regretful sigh
 Can say, adieu, and see thee fly?
 Not he that e'er hath felt thy pow'r,
 His joy expanding like a flow'r,
 That cometh after rain and snow,
 Looks up at heaven, and learns to glow:—
 Not he that fled from Babel-strife
 To the green sabbath-land of life,
 To dodge dull Care 'mid cluster'd trees,
 And cool his forehead in the breeze

Whose spirit, weary-worn, perchance,
Shook from its wings a weight of grief,
And perch'd upon an aspen leaf,
For every breath to make it dance.

Farewell!—on wings of sombre stain,
That blacken in the last blue skies,
Thou fly'st; but thou wilt come again
On the gay wings of butterflies.
Spring at thy approach will sprout
Her new Corinthian beauties out,
Leaf-woven homes, where twitter-words
Will grow to songs, and eggs to birds;
Ambitious buds shall swell to flowers,
And April smiles to sunny hours.
Bright days shall be, and gentle nights
Full of soft breath and echo-lights
As if the god of sun-time kept
His eyes half-open while he slept.
Roses shall be where roses were,
Not shadows, but reality;
As if they never perish'd there,
But slept in immortality:
Nature shall thrill with new delight,
And Time's relumined river run
Warm as young blood, and dazzling bright,
As if its source were in the sun!

But say, hath Winter then no charms?
 Is there no joy, no gladness warms
 His aged heart? no happy wiles
 To cheat the hoary one to smiles?
 Onward he comes—the cruel North
 Pours his furious whirlwind forth
 Before him—and we breathe the breath
 Of famish'd bears that howl to death.
 Onward he comes from rocks that blanch
 O'er solid streams that never flow:
 His tears all ice, his locks all snow,
 Just crept from some huge avalanche—
 A thing half-breathing and half-warm,
 As if one spark began to glow
 Within some statue's marble form,
 Or pilgrim stiffen'd in the storm.
 Oh! will not Mirth's light arrows fail
 To pierce that frozen coat of mail?
 Oh! will not joy but strive in vain
 To light up those glazed eyes again?

No! take him in, and blaze the oak,
 And pour the wine, and warm the ale;
 His sides shall shake to many a joke,
 His tongue shall thaw in many a tale,
 His eyes grow bright, his heart be gay,
 And even his palsy charm'd away.
 What heeds he then the boisterous shout
 Of angry winds that scold without,

Like shrewish wives at tavern door?
What heeds he then the wild uproar
Of billows bursting on the shore?
In dashing waves, in howling breeze,
'There is a music that can charm him;
When safe, and shelter'd, and at ease,
He hears the storm that cannot harm him.

But hark! those shouts! that sudden din
Of little hearts that laugh within.
Oh! take him where the youngsters play,
And he will grow as young as they!
They come! they come! each blue-eyed Sport,
The Twelfth-Night King and all his court—
'Tis Mirth fresh crown'd with mistletoe!
Music with her merry fiddles,
Joy "on light fantastic toe,"
Wit with all his jests and riddles,
Singing and dancing as they go.
And Love, young Love, among the rest,
A welcome—nor unbidden guest.

But still for Summer dost thou grieve?
Then read our Poets—they shall weave
A garden of green fancies still,
Where thy wish may rove at will.
They have kept for after-treats
The essences of summer sweets,

And echoes of its songs that wind
 In endless music through the mind :
 They have stamp'd in visible traces
 The "thoughts that breathe," in words that shine —
 The flights of soul in sunny places—
 To greet and company with thine.
 These shall wing thee on to flow'rs—
 The past or future, that shall seem
 All the brighter in thy dream
 For blowing in such desert hours.
 The summer never shines so bright
 As thought-of in a winter's night ;
 And the sweetest, loveliest rose
 Is in the bud before it blows ;
 The dear one of the lover's heart
 Is painted to his longing eyes,
 In charms she ne'er can realise—
 But when she turns again to part.
 Dream thou then, and bind thy brow
 With wreath of fancy roses now,
 And drink of Summer in the cup
 Where the Muse hath mix'd it up ;
 The "dance, and song, and sun-burnt mirth,"
 With the warm nectar of the earth :
 Drink ! 'twill glow in every vein,
 And thou shalt dream the winter through :
 Then waken to the sun again,
 And find thy Summer Vision true !

TO JANE.

WELCOME, dear Heart, and a most kind good-morrow ;
The day is gloomy, but our looks shall shine :—
Flowers I have none to give thee, but I borrow
Their sweetness in a verse to speak for thine.

Here are red Roses, gather'd at thy cheeks,
The white were all too happy to look white,
For love the Rose, for faith the Lily speaks ;
It withers in false hands, but here 'tis bright !

Dost love sweet Hyacinth ? Its scented leaf
Curls manifold,—all love's delights blow double ;
'Tis said this flow'et is inscribed with grief,—
But let that hint of a forgotten trouble.

I pluck'd the Primrose at night's dewy noon ,
Like Hope, it show'd its blossoms in the night ;—
'Twas, like Endymion, watching for the Moon
And here are Sun-flowers, amorous of light !

These golden Buttercups are April's seal,—
The Daisy-stars her constellations be :
These grew so lowly, I was forced to kneel,
Therefore I pluck no Daisies but for thee !

Here's Daisies for the morn, Primrose for gloom,
Pansies and Roses for the noontide hours :—
A wight once made a dial of their bloom,—
So may thy life be measured out by flowers!

TO HOPE.

Oh ! take, young seraph, take thy harp,
And play to me so cheerily ;
For grief is dark, and care is sharp.
And life wears on so wearily.
Oh ! take thy harp !
Oh ! sing as thou were wont to do,
When, all youth's sunny season long,
I sat and listen'd to thy song,
And yet 'twas ever, ever new.
With magic in its heaven-tuned string—
The future bliss thy constant theme,
Oh ! then each little woe took wing
Away, like phantoms of a dream ;
As if each sound
That fluttered round
Had floated over Lethe's stream !

By all those bright and happy hours
We spent in life's sweet eastern bow'rs,
Where thou wouldst sit and smile, and show,
Ere buds were come, where flowers would grow,

And oft anticipate the rise
Of life's warm sun that scaled the skies;
By many a story of love and glory,
And friendships promised oft to me;
By all the faith I lent to thee,—
Oh! take, young seraph, take thy harp,
And play to me so cheerily;
For grief is dark, and care is sharp,
And life weats on so wearily.
Oh! take thy harp!

Perchance the strings will sound less clear,
That long have lain neglected by
In sorrow's misty atmosphere;
It ne'er may speak as it has spoken
Such joyous notes so brisk and high;
But are its golden chords all broken?
Are there not some, though weak and low,
'To play a lullaby to woe?
But thou canst sing of love no more,
For Celia show'd that dream was vain;
And many a fancied bliss is o'er,
That comes not e'en in dreams again.
Alas! alas!
How pleasures pass,
And leave thee now no subject, save,
The peace and bliss beyond the grave!

Then be thy flight among the skies :

Take, then, oh ! take the skylark's wing,
And leave dull earth, and heavenward rise
O'er all its tearful clouds, and sing
On skylark's wing !

Another life-spring there adorns

Another youth, without the dread
Of cruel care, whose crown of thorns
Is here for manhood's aching head.
Oh ! there are realms of welcome day,
A world where tears are wiped away !
Then be thy flight among the skies :

Take, then, oh ! take the skylark's wing,
And leave dull earth, and heavenward rise
O'er all its tearful clouds and sing
On skylark's wing !



I LOVE THEE.



I LOVE thee—I love thee !

'Tis all that I can say,—
It is my vision in the night,
My dreaming in the day ;
The very echo of my heart,
The blessing when I pray
I love thee—I love thee !
Is all that I can say.

I love thee—I love thee!
Is ever on my tongue;
In all my proudest poesy
That chorus still is sung;
It is the verdict of my eyes,
Amidst the gay and young:
I love thee—I love thee!
A thousand maids among.

I love thee—I love thee!
Thy bright and hazel glance,
The mellow lute upon those lips,
Whose tender tones entrance;
But most, dear heart of hearts, thy proofs
That still these words enhance,
I love thee—I love thee!
Whatever be thy chance.

STANZAS ON COMING OF AGE.

To-day it is my natal day,
Three 'prenticeships have past away,
A part in work, a part in play.
Since I was bound to life!
This first of May I come of age,
A man, I enter on the stage
Where human passions fret and rage,
To mingle in the strife.

It ought to be a happy date,
My friends they all congratulate
That I am come to "Man's Estate,"
To some, a grand event ;
But ah ! to me descent allots
No acres, no paternal spots
In Beds, Bucks, Herts, Wilts, Essex, Notts,
Hants, Oxon, Berks, or Kent.

From John o'Groat's to Land's End search,
I have not one rod, pole, or perch,
To pay my rent, or tithe to church,
That I can call my own.
Not common-right for goose or ass ;
Then what is man's Estate ? Alas !
Six feet by two of mould and grass
When I am dust and bone.

Reserve the feast ! The board forsake !
Ne'er tap the wine—don't cut the cake,
No toasts or foolish speeches make,
At which my reason spurns.
Before this happy term you praise,
And prate about returns and days,
Just o'er my vacant rent-roll gaze,
And sum up my returns.

I know where great estates descend
 That here is Boyhood's legal end,
 And easily can comprehend
 How "Minors make the Man."
 But as for me, I was not born
 To quit-rent of a peppercorn,
 And gain no ground this blessed morn
 From Beersheba to Dan.

No barrels broach—no bonfires make!
 To roast a bullock for my sake,
 Who in the country have no stake,
 Would be too like a quiz ;
 No banners hoist—let off no gun—
 Pitch no marquee—devise no fun—
 But think when man is 'Twenty-One
 What new delights are his !

What is the moral legal fact—
 Of age to-day, I'm free to act
 For self—free, namely, to contract
 Engagements, bonds, and debts ;
 I'm free to give my I O U,
 Sign, draw, accept, as majors do ;
 And free to lose my freedom too
 For want of due assets.

I am of age, to ask Miss Ball,
Or that great heiress, Miss Duval,
To go to church, hump, squint, and all,
And be my own for life.
But put such reasons on their shelves,
To tell the truth between ourselves,
I'm one of those contented elves
Who do not want a wife.

What else belongs to Manhood still?
I'm old enough to make my will
With valid clause and codicil
Before in turf I lie.
But I have nothing to bequeath
In earth, or waters underneath,
And in all candour let me breathe,
I do not want to die.

Away! if this be Manhood's forte,
Put by the sherry and the port—
No ring of bells—no rustic sport—
No dance—no merry pipes!
No flowery gardens—no bouque.—
No Birthday Ode to sing, or say—
To me it seems this is a day
For bread and cheese and swipes.

To justify the festive cup
 What horrors here are conjured up!
 What things of bitter bite and sup,
 Poor wretched 'Twenty-One's!
 No landed lumps, but trumps and humps,
 (Discretion's Days are far from trump-)
 Domestic discord, dowdies, dumps,
 Death, dockets, debts, and duns.

If you must drink, oh drink "the King"—
 Reform—the Church—the Press—the Ring,
 Drink Aldgate Pump—or anything,
 Before a toast like this!
 Nay, tell me, coming thus of age,
 And turning o'er this sorry page,
 Was young Nineteen so far from sage?
 Or young Eighteen from bliss?

Till this dail, cold, wet, happy morn—
 No sign of May about the thorn,—
 Were Love and Bacchus both unborn?
 Had beauty not a shape!
 Make answer, sweet Kate Finnerty!
 Make answer, lads of Trinity!
 Who sipped with me Divinity,
 And quaff'd the ruby grape!

No flummery then from flowery lips,
No three times three and hip-hip-hips,
Because I'm ripe and full of pips—

I like a little green.

To put me on my solemn oath,
If sweep-like I could stop my growth
I would remain, and nothing loth,
A boy—about nineteen.

My friends, excuse me these rebukes
Were I a monarch's son or duke's,
Go to the Vatican of Meux

And broach his biggest barrels—
Impale whole elephants on spits—
Ring Tom of Lincoln till he splits,
And dance into St. Vitus' fits,
And break your winds with carols.

But ah! too well you know my lot,
Ancestral acres greet me not,
My freehold's in a garden-pot,

And barely worth a pin,
Away then with all festive stuff!
Let Robins advertise and puff
My "Man's Estate," I'm sure enough
I shall not buy it in-

OLD BALLAD.

THERE was a Fairy lived in a well,
 And she pronounced a magical spell ;
 " Whoever looks in this wave," she said,
 " Shall see the lady that he's to wed ! "

A King came by with his hunting-spear
 And stoop'd to look in the waters clear ;
 He laid by the brim the signet of gold,
 And gave his Brother his crown to hold.

But while he knelt and was looking down,
 His Brother stood and tried-on the crown ;
 The pearls were bright, and the rubies brave,
 So he tumbled his brother into the wave.

" Oh Brother, oh Brother, you've got my ring
 And the lawful crown that made me king ;
 But your heart shall fail, and your hand shall quake,
 And the head that wears my jewels shall ache ! "

The murderer stood and look'd from the brink,
 " The sun is so hot, I should like to drink ! "
 But lo ! as he stoop'd with a silver cup,
 His head went down, and his heels flew up !

" Oh ! Brother, oh ! Brother,—I've got your crown
But the weight of the jewels has pull'd me down,
You shall be crown'd in the skies again,—
But I shall be mark'd on the brow like Cain ! "

Down he sank in the dismal wave,
As cold as death, and dark as the grave ;
But when he came to the stones at last,
'The Fairy caught him, and held him fast.

She took him into her crystal hall
And there he saw his face in the wall ;
She look'd rosy, but he look'd white,
And all the tapers were burning bright.

The King leap'd down from his Fairy throne,
With eyes that brighter than diamonds shone ;
His left hand balanced a golden globe, *
But his right hand lifted his purple robe.

" Oh Brother ! oh Brother ! bend down your knee,
But kneel to heaven, and not to me,
For God may frown on your grievous sin,
But I'm too happy you push'd me in.

" Come hither, come hither, you're welcome now,
To my crown of gold that decks your brow ;
There's smiles worth heav'n on my true-love's face,
And she has made me King of this place ! "

EPICUREAN REMINISCENCES OF A
SENTIMENTALIST.

"My Tables! Meat it is, I set it down!"—HAMLET.

I THINK it was Spring—but not certain I am—
When my passion began first to work ;
But I know we were certainly looking for lamb,
And the season was over for pork.

'Twas at Christmas, I think, when I met with Miss Chase,
Yes,—for MORRIS had asked me to dine,—
And I thought I had never beheld such a face,
Or so noble a turkey and chine.

Placed close by her side, it made others quite wild,
With sheer envy to witness my luck ;
How she blushed as I gave her some turtle, and smil'd
As I afterwards offered some duck.

I looked and I languished, alas, to my cost,
Through three courses of dishes and meats ;
Getting deeper in love—but my heart was quite lost,
When it came to the trifle and sweets!

With a rent-roll that told of my houses and land,
To her parents I told my designs—
And then to herself I presented my hand,
With a very fine pottle of pines!

I asked her to have me for weal or for woe,
And she did not object in the least ;—
I can't tell the date—but we married, I know,
Just in time to have game at the feast.

We went to ———, it certainly was the seaside ;
For the next, the most blessed of morns,
I remember how fondly I gazed at my bride,
Sitting down to a plateful of prawns.

O never may mem'ry lose sight of that year,
But still hallow the time as it ought,
That season the " grass " was remarkably dear,
And the peas at a guinea a quart.

So happy, like hours, all our day seem'd to haste,
A fond pair, such as poets have drawn,
So united in heart—so congenial in taste,
We were both of us partial to brawn !

A long life I looked for of bliss with my bride,
But then Death—I ne'er dreamt about that !
Oh there's nothing is certain in life, as I cried,
When my turbot eloped with the cat !

My dearest took ill at the turn of the year,
But the cause no physician could nah ;
But something it seem'd like consumption, I fear,
It was just after supping on crab.

LINES ON PAWNING MY WATCH. 283

In vain she was doctor'd, in vain she was dosed,
Still her strength and her appetite pined ;
She lost relish for what she had relish'd the most,
Even salmon she deeply declin'd !

For months still I linger'd in hope and in doubt,
While her form it grew wasted and thin ;
But the last dying spark of existence went out,
As the oysters were just coming in !

She died, and she left me the saddest of men
To indulge in a widower's moan,
Oh, I felt all the power of solitude then,
As I ate my first natives alone !

But when I beheld Virtue's friends in their cloaks,
And with sorrowful crape on their hats,
O my grief poured a flood ! and the out-of-door folks
Were all crying—I think it was sprats !

FUGITIVE LINES ON PAWNING MY
WATCH.

FAREWELL then, my golden repeater,
We're come to my Uncle's old shop ;
And hunger won't be a dumb-waiter,
The Cerberus growls for a sop !

284 LINES ON PAWNING MY WATCH.

To quit thee, my comrade diurnal,
My feelings will certainly scotch ;
But oh ! there's a riot internal,
And Famine calls out for the Watch !

Oh ! hunger's a terrible trial,
I really must have a relief,—
So here goes the plate of your dial
To fetch me some Williams's beef !

As famish'd as any lost seaman,
I've fasted for many a dawn,
And now must play chess with the Demon,
And give it a *check* with a *pawn*.

I've fasted since dining at Buncle's,
Two days with true Percival zeal—
And now must make up at my Uncle's
By getting a *duplicate* meal.

No Peachum it is, or young Lockit,
That rifles my fob with a snatch ;
Alas ! I must pick my own pocket,
And make gravy-soup of my watch !

So long have I wander'd a starver,
I'm getting as keen as a hawk ;
Time's long hand must take up a carver,
His short hand lay hold of a fork.

Right heavy and sad the event is,
But oh! it is Poverty's crime;
I've been such a Brownrigg's Apprentice,
I thus must be "out of my Time."

Alas! when in Brook Street the upper
In comfort I lived between walls,
I've gone to a dance for my supper;—
But now I must go to Three Balls!

Folks talk about dressing for dinner,
But I have for dinner undrest;
Since Christmas, as I am a sinner,
I've eaten a suit of my best.

I haven't a rag or a mammock
To fetch me a chop or a steak;
I wish that the coats of my stomach
Were such as my Uncle would take!

When dishes were ready with garnish
My watch used to warn with a chime—
But now my repeater must furnish
The dinner in lieu of the time!

My craving will have no denials,
I can't fob it off, if you stay,
So go,—and the old Seven Dials
Must tell me the time of the day.

Your chimes I shall never more hear 'em,
 To part is a *Tic Douloureux* !
 But *Tempus* has his *edax rerum*,
 And I have my Feeding-Time too !

Farewell then, my golden repeater.
 We're come to my Uncle's old shop—
 And Hunger wont be a dumb-waiter,
 The Cerberus growls for a sop !

SONNET.

Love, dearest Lady, such as I would speak,
 Lives not within the humour of the eye;—
 Not being but an outward phantasy,
 That skims the surface of a tinted cheek,—
 Else it would wane with beauty, and grow weak.
 As if the rose made summer,—and so lie
 Amongst the perishable things that die,
 Unlike the love that I would give and seek :
 Whose health is of no hue—to feel decay
 With cheeks' decay, that have a rosy prime.
 Love is its own great loveliness alway,
 And takes new lustre from the touch of time;
 Its bough owns no December and no May,
 But bears its blossom into Winter's clime.

DRINKING SONG.

BY A MEMBER OF A TEMPERANCE SOCIETY, AS SUNG
BY MR. SPRING, AT WATERMAN'S HALL.

COME, pass round the pail, boys, and give it no quarter,
Drink deep, and drink oft, and replenish your jugs,
Fill up, and I'll give you a toast to your water—
The Turncock for ever! that opens the plugs!

Then hey for a bucket, a bucket, a bucket,
Then hey for a bucket, filled up to the brim!
Or, best of all notions, let's have it by oceans,
With plenty of room for a sink or a swim!

Let toppers of grape-juice exultingly vapour,
But let us just whisper a word to the elves,
We water roads, horses, silks, ribands, bank-paper,
Plants, poets, and muses, and why not ourselves?
Then hey for a bucket, &c.

The vintage they cry, think of Spain's and of France's,
The jigs, the boleros, fandangos, and jumps;
But water's the spring of all civilized dances,
We go to a ball not in bottles, but *pumps*!
Then hey for a bucket, &c.

Let others of Dorchester quaff at their pleasure,
Or honour old Meux with their thirsty regard—
We'll drink Adam's ale, and we get it *pool* measure,
Or quaff heavy wet from the butt in the yard!
Then hey for a bucket, &c.

Some flatter gin, brandy, and rum, on their merits,
Grog, Punch, and what not, that enliven a feast:
'Tis true they stir up the animal spirits,
But may not the animal turn out a beast?
Then hey for a bucket, &c.

The Man of the Ark, who continued our species,
He saved us by water,—but as for the wine,
We all know the figure, more sad than facetious,
He made after tasting the juice of the vine.
Then hey for a bucket, &c.

In wine let a lover remember his jewel,
And pledge her in bumpers fill'd brimming and oft;
But we can distinguish the kind from the cruel,
And toast them in water, the *hard* or the *soft*.
Then hey for a bucket, &c.

Some cross'd in their passion can never o'erlook it,
But take to a pistol, a knife, or a beam;
Whilst temperate swains are enabled to *brook* it
By help of a little meandering stream.
Then hey for a bucket, &c.

Should fortune diminish our cash's sum-total,
Deranging our wits and our private affairs,
Though some in such cases would fly to the bottle,
There's nothing like water for drowning our cares.
Then hey for a bucket, &c.

See drinkers of water, their wits never lacking,
Direct as a railroad and smooth in their gait;
But look at the bibbers of wine, they go tacking,
Like ships that have met a foul wind in the *straits*
Then hey for a bucket, &c.

A fig then for Burgundy, Claret, or Mountain,
A few scanty glasses must limit your wish,
But he's the true toper that goes to the fountain,
The drinker that verily "drinks like a fish!"
Then hey for a bucket, &c.

THE COMPASS, WITH VARIATIONS

ONE close of day—'twas in the bay
Of Naples, bay of glory!
While light was hanging crowns of gold
On mountains high and hoary,
A gallant bark got under weigh,
And with her sails my story.

For Leghorn she was bound direct,
With wine and oil for cargo,
Her crew of men some nine or ten,
The captain's name was Iago;
A good and gallant bark she was,
La Donna (call'd del Iago.

Bronzed mariners were hers to view,
 With brown cheeks, clear or muddy,
 Dark, shining eyes, and coal-black hair,
 Meet heads for painter's study ;
 But 'midst their tan there stood one man,
 Whose cheek was fair and ruddy ;

His brow was high, a loftier brow
 Ne'er shone in song or sonnet,
 His hair a little scant, and when
 He doffed his cap or bonnet,
 One saw that Grey had gone beyond
 A premiership upon it !

His eye—a passenger was he,
 The cabin he had hired it,—
 His eye was grey, and when he look'd
 Around the prospect fired it—
 A fine poetic light, as if
 The Appe-Nine inspired it.

His frame was stout, in height about
 Six feet—well made and portly ;
 Of dress and manner just to give
 A sketch, but very shortly,
 His order seemed a composite
 Of rustic with the courtly.

THE COMPASS, WITH VARIATIONS. 291

He ate and quaff'd and joked and laughed,
And chatted with the seamen,
And often task'd their skill and ask'd
"What weather is't to be, man?"
No demonstration there appear'd
That he was any demon.

No sort of sign there was that he
Could raise a stormy rumpus,
Like Prospero make breezes blow,
And rocks and billows thump us,—
But little we supposed what he
Could with the needle compass!

Soon came a storm—the sea at first
Seem'd lying almost fallow—
When lo! full crash, with billowy dash,
From clouds of black and yellow,
Came such a gale, as blows but once
A cent'ry, like the aloe!

Our stomachs we had just prepared
To vest a small amount in;
When, gush! a flood of brine came down
The skylight—quite a fountain,
And right on end the table rear'd,
Just like the Table Mountain.

292 THE COMPASS, WITH VARIATIONS.

Down rush'd the soup, down gush'd the wine,
Each roll, its role repeating,
Roll'd down—the round of beef declar'd
For parting—not for meating!
Off flew the fowls, and all the game
Was “too far gone for eating!”

Down knife and fork—down went the pork,
The lamb too broke its tether;
Down mustard went—each condiment—
Salt—pepper—all together!
Down everything, like craft that seek
The Downs in stormy weather.

Down plunged the Lady of the Lake,
Her timbers seemed to sever
Down, down, a dreary sorry down,
Such lurch she had gone never;
She almost seemed about to take
A bed of down for ever!

Down dropt the captain's nether jaw,
That robb'd of all its uses,
He thought he saw the Evil One
Beside Vesuvian sluices,
Playing at dice for soul and ship,
And throwing *Sink* and *Deuces*.

Down fell the steward on his face,
To all the Saints commending ;
And candles to the Virgin vow'd
As save-alls 'gainst his ending.
Down fell the man, he thought his fate,
Check-mate, was close impending.

Down fell the cook—the cabin boy
Their heads with favour telling,
While alps of ice, with snowy verge,
Above the yacht came yelling
Down fell the crew, and on their knees
Shudder'd at each white swelling!

Down sunk the sun of bloody hue,
His crimson light a cleaver
To each red rover of a wave :
To eye of larcy-weaver
Neptune, the God, seem'd tossing in
A raging scarlet fever!

Sore, sore afraid, each papist pray'd
To Saint and Virgin Mary ;
But one there was that stood composed
Amid the waves' vagary ;
As staunch as rock, a true game cock
'Mid chicks o' Mother Garry ;

His ruddy cheek retain'd its streak,
 No danger seem'd to shrink him :
 His step still bold,—of mortal mould,
 The crew could hardly think him :
 The Lady of the Lake, he seem'd
 To know, could never sink him.

Relax'd at last the furious gale
 Quite out of breath with racing ;
 The boiling flood in milder mood,
 With gentler billows chasing ;
 From stem to stern, with frequent turn,
 The Stranger took to pacing.

And as he walk'd to self he talked.
 Some ancient dirty humming,
 In under tone, as not above—
 Now whistling, and now humming—
 “You're welcome, Charlie,” “Cowdenknowes,”
 “Kenmore,” or “Campbells' Coming.”

Down went the wind, down went the wave,
 Fear quitted the most frival ;
 The Saints, I wot, were soon forgot,
 And Hope was at the pinnacle :
 When rose on high, a frightful cry—
 “The Devil's in the binnacle !”

THE COMPASS, WITH VARIATIONS. 295

"The Saints be near," the helmsman cried,
His voice with quite a falter—
"Steady's my helm, but every look
The needle seems to alter;
God only knows where China lies,
Jamaica, or Gibraltar!"

The captain stared aghast at mate,
The pilot at th' apprentice;
No fancy of the German Sea
Of Fiction the event is:
But when they at the compass look'd
It seem'd non compass mentis.

Now north, now south, now east, now west,
The wavering point was shaken,
'Twas past the whole philosophy
Of Newton, or of Bacon;
Never by compass, till that hour
Such latitudes were taken!

With fearful speech, each after each
Took turns in the inspection;
They found no gun—no iron—none
To vary its direction;
It seem'd a new magnetic case
Of Poles in insurrection!

Farewell to wives, farewell their lives,
 And all their household riches;
 Oh! while they thought of girl or boy,
 And dear domestic niches,
 All down the side which holds the heart,
 That needle gave them stitches.

With deep amaze, the Stranger gaz'd
 To see them so white-liver'd;
 And walk'd abaft the binnacle,
 To know at what they shiver'd;
 But when he stood beside the card,
 St. Josef! how it quiver'd!

No fancy-motion, brain-begot,
 In eye of timid dreamer—
 The nervous finger of a set
 Ne'er show'd a plainer tremor;
 To every brain it seem'd too plain,
 There stood th' Infernal Schemer!

Mix'd brown and blue each visage grew,
 Just like a pullet's gizzard;
 Meanwhil' the captain's wandering wit,
 From tuckling like an izzard,
 Bore down in this plain course at last,
 "It's Michael Scott—the Wizard!"

A smile past o'er the ruddy face,
"To see the poles so falter
I'm puzzled, friends, as much as you,
For with no fiends I alter !
Michael I'm not—although a Scott—
My christian name is Walter."

Like oil it fell, that name, a spell
On all the feared faction ;
The Captain's head (for he had read)
Confess'd the Needle's action,
And bow'd to Him in whom the North
Has lodged its main attraction.

POEM.—FROM THE POLISH.

FROM seventy-two North latitude,
Dear Kitty, I indite ;
But first I'd have you understand
How hard it is to write.

Of thoughts that breathe and words that burn,
My Kitty, do not think,—
Before I wrote these very lines,
I had to melt my ink.

Of mutual flames and lover's warmth,
You must not be too nice ;
The sheet that I am writing on
Was once a sheet of ice !

The Polar cold is sharp enough
To freeze with icy gloss
The genial current of the soul,
E'en in a "Man of Ross."

Pope says that letters wait a sigh
From Indus to the Pole ;
But here I really wish the post
Would only "post the *coal*."

So chilly is the Northern blast,
It blows me through and through
A ton of Walkend in a note
Would be a billet-doux !

In such a frigid latitude
It scarce can be a sin,
Should Passion cool a little, where
A Fury was iced in.

I'm rather tired of endless snow,
And long for coals again ;
And would give up a Sea of Ice,
For some of Lambton's Main.

I'm sick of dazzling ice and snow,
The sun itself I hate ;
So very bright, so very cold,
Just like a summer grate.

For opodeldoc I would kneel,
My chill-lains to anoint ;
O Kate, the needle of the North
Has got a freezing point.

Our food is solids,—ere we put
Our meat into our crops,
We take sledge-hammers to our steaks
And hatchets to our chops.

So very bitter is the blast,
So cutting is the air,
I never have been warm but once,
When hugging with a bear.

One thing I know you'll like to hear,
Th' effect of Polar snows,
I've left off snuff—one pinching day—
From leaving off my nose.

I have no ear for music new ;
My ears both left together ;
And as for dancing, I have cut
My toes—it's cutting weather.

I've said that you should have my hand,
Some happy day to come ;
But, Kate, you only now can wed
A finger and a thumb.

Don't fear that any Esquimaux
Can wean me from my own ;
The Girdle of the Queen of Love
Is not the Frozen Zone.

At wives with large estates of snow
My fancy does not bite ;
I like to see a Bride--but not
In such a deal of white.

Give me for home a house of brick,
The Kate I love at Kew ;
A hand unchopped--a merry eye ;
And not a nose, of blue

To think upon the Bridge of Kew,
To me a Bridge of sighs ;
Oh, Kate a pair of icicles
Are standing in my eyes!

God knows if I shall e'er return,
In comfort to be lull'd !
But if I do get back to port,
Pray let me have it mull'd.

TO A COLD BEAUTY.

LADY, wouldst thou heiness be
To Winter's cold and cruel part?
When he sets the rivers free,
Thou dost still lock up thy heart;—
Thou that shouldst oust the snow,
But in the whiteness of thy brow

Scorn and cold need, et are made
For winter gloom and winter wind,
But thou wilt wrong the summer air,
Breathing it to words unkind,—
Breath which only should belong
To love, to sunlight, and to song!

When the little buds unclose,
Red, and white, and pied, and blue,
And that virgin flow'r, the rose,
Opes her heart to hold the dew,
Wilt thou lock thy bosom up
With no jewel in its cup?

Let not cold December sit
Thus in Love's peculiar throne:
Brooklets are not prison'd now,
But crystal frosts are all agone,
And that which hangs upon the spray,
It is no snow, but flow'r of May!

QUEEN MAB.

A LITTLE fairy comes at night,
Her eyes are blue, her hair is brown,
With silver spots upon her wings,
And from the moon she flutters down.

She has a little silver wand,
And when a good child goes to bed
She waves her wand from right to left,
And makes a circle round its head.

And then it dreams of pleasant things,
Of fountains filled with fairy fish,
And trees that bear delicious fruit
And bow their branches at a wish:

Of arbours filled with dainty scents
From lovely flowers that never fade ;
Bright flies that glitter in the sun,
And glow-worms shining in the shade:

And talking birds with gifted tongues,
For singing songs and telling tales,
And pretty dwarfs to show the way
Through fairy hills and fairy dales.

But when a bad child goes to bed,
 From left to right she weaves her rings,
 And then it dreams all through the night
 Of only ugly horrid things!

Then lions come with glaring eyes,
 And tigers growl, a dreadful noise,
 And ogres draw their cruel knives,
 To shed the blood of girls and boys.

Then stormy waves rush on to drown,
 Or raging flames come scorching round,
 Fierce dragons hover in the air,
 And serpents crawl along the ground,

Then wicked children wake and weep.
 And wish the long black gloom away;
 But good ones love the dark, and find
 The night as pleasant as the day.

BIRTHDAY VERSES.

Good morrow to the golden morning,
 Good morrow to the world's delight—
 I've come to bless thy life's beginning,
 Since it makes my own so bright!

I have brought no roses, sweetest,
 I could find no flowers, dear,—
 It was when all sweets were over
 Thou wert born to bless the year.

But I've brought thee jewels, dearest,
 In thy bonny locks to shine,—
 And if love show in their glances,
 They have learn'd that look of mine!

SONNET.

ON RECEIVING A GIFT.

Look how the golden ocean shines above
 Its pebbly stones, and magnifies their worth;
 So does the bright and blessed light of Love
 Its own things glorify, and raise their worth.
 As weeds seem flowers beneath the flattering brine,
 And stones like gems, and gems as gems indeed,
 Ev'n so our tokens shine; nay, they outshine
 Pebbles and pearls, and gems and coral weed;
 For where be ocean wave - but half so clear,
 So calmly constant, and so kindly warm,
 As Love's most mild and glowing atmosphere,
 That hath no dregs to be upturn'd by storm?
 Thus, sweet, thy gracious gifts are gifts of price,
 And more than gold to doting Avarice.

OVER THE WAY.

ALAS! the flames of an unhappy lover
About my heart and on my vitals prey;
I've caught a fever that I can't get over,
Over the way!

Oh! why are eyes of blood? roses faded?
I've lost my rest by night, my peace by day,
For want of some brown Holland or Venetian,
Over the way!

I've gazed too often, till my heart's as lost
As any needle in a stack of hay;
Crosses belong to love, and mine is crossed
Over the way!

I cannot read or write, or thoughts relax--
Of what avail Lord Althorpe or Dal'Grey?
They cannot ease me of my window-tax
Over the way!

Even on Sunday my devotion waver,
And from St. Bennet Fink they go away
To dear St. Mary Overy--the Mary
Over the way!

Oh ! if my godmother were but a fairy,
With magic wand, how I would beg and pray
That she would change me into that canary
Over the way !

I envy every thing that's near Miss Lindo,
A pug, a poll, a squirrel or a jay—
Blest blue-bottles ! that buz about the window
Over the way !

Even at even, for there be no shutters,
I see her reading on, from grave to gay,
Some tale or poem, till the candle gutters
Over the way !

And then—oh ! then—while the clear waxen taper
Emits, two stories high, a star-like ray,
I see twelve auburn curls put into paper
Over the way !

But how breathe unto her my deep regards,
Or ask her for a whispered ay or nay,—
Or offer her my hand, some thirty yards
Over the way !

Cold as the pole she is to my adoring ;—
Like Captain Lyon, at Repulse's Bay,
I meet an icy end to my exploring
Over the way !

Each dirty little Savoyard that dances
She looks on—Punch—or chimney-sweeps in May ;
Zounds ! wherefore cannot I attract her glances
Over the way !

Half out she leans to watch a tumbling brat,
Or yelping cur, run over by a dray ;
But I'm in love—she never pities that !
Over the way !

I go to the same church—a love-lost labour !
Haunt all her walks, and dodge her at the play,
She does not seem to know she has a neighbour
Over the way !

At private theatres she never acts ;
No Crown-and-Anchor balls her fancy sway ;
She never visits gentlemen with tracts
Over the way !

To billets-doux by post she shows no favour—
In short, there is no plot that I can lay
To break my window-pains to my enslaver
Over the way !

I play the flute—she heeds not my chromatics—
No friend an introduction can purvey ,
I wish a fire would break out in the attics
Over the way !

My wasted form ought of itself to touch her ;
My baker feels my appetite's decay ;
And as for butchers' meat—Oh ! she's my butcher
Over the way !

At beef I turn , at lamb or veal I pout ;
I never ring now to bring up the tray ;
My stomach grumbles at my dining out
Over the way !

I'm weary of my life ; without regret
I could resign this miserable clay
To lie within that box of mineonette
Over the way !

I've fitted bullet to my pistol-bore ;
I've vowed at times to rush where trumpets blay,
Quite sick of number one—and number four
Over the way !

Sometimes my fancy builds up castles airy.
Sometimes it only paints a ferme ornée,
A horse—a cow—six fowls—a pig—and Mary,
Over the way !

Sometimes I dream of her in bridal white,
Standing before the altar like a fay ;
Sometimes of balls, and neighbourly invite
Over the way !

I've woo'd with her in dreams, like any turtle,
I've snatch'd her from the Clyde, the Tweed, and Tay,
Thrice I have made a grove of that one myrtle
Over the way :

Thrice I have rowed her in a fairy shallop,
Thrice raced to Greta in a neat "po-hay,"
And shower'd crown to make the horses galop
Over the way !

And thrice I've started up from dreams, appalling
Of killing rivals in a bloody fray—
There is a young man very fond of killing
Over the way !

Oh! happy man—above all kings in glory,
Whoever in her ear may say his say,
And add a tale of love to that one story
Over the way !

Nabob of Arcot—Despot of Japan—
Sultan of Persia—Emperor of Cathay—
Much rather would I be the happy man
Over the way !

With such a lot my heart would be in clover—
But what—O horror!—what do I survey!
Postilions and white favours!—all is over
Over the way !

THE APPARITION.

In the dead of the night, when, from beds that are turfy,
The spirits rise up on old cronies to call,
Came a shade from the Shades on a visit to Murphy,
Who had not foreseen such a visit at all.

"Don't shiver and shake," said the mild Apparition,
"I'm come to your bed with no evil design;
I'm the Spirit of Moore, Francis Moore the Physician,
Once great like yourself in the Almanack line.

Like you I was once a great prophet or weather,
And deem'd to possess a more prescient knack
Than dogs, frogs, pigs, cattle, or cats, all together,
The donkeys that bray, and the dillies that quack.

With joy, then, as ashes retain former passion,
I saw my old mantle lugg'd out from the shelf,
Turn'd, trimmed, and brush'd up, and again brought in
fashion,
I seem'd to be almost reviving myself!

But, oh! from my joys there was soon a sad cantle,
As too many cooks make a mull of the broth—
To find that two Prophets were under my mantle,
And pulling two ways at the risk of the cloth.

Unless you would meet with an awkwardish tumble,
Oh! join like the Siamese twins in your jumps;
Just fancy if Faith on her Prophets should tumble,
The one in his clogs, and the other in pumps!

But think how the people would worship and wonder,
To find you "hail fellows, well met," in your hail,
In one tune with your rain, and your wind, and your
thunder,
"Fore God," they would cry, "they are both in a tale!"

SONG.

FOR MUSIC.

A LAKE and a fairy boat
To sail in the moonlight clear,—
And merrily we would float
From the dragons that watch us here:

Thy gown should be snow-white silk,
And strings of orient pearls,
Like gossamers dipt in milk,
Should twine with thy raven curls!

Red rubies should deck thy hands,
And diamonds should be thy dower—
But Fairies have broke their wands
And wishing has lost its power.

THE KEY.

A MOORISH ROMANCE.

The Moor leans on his cushion,
 With the pipe between his lips;
 And still at frequent intervals
 The sweet shalwar he sips;
 Loosely of lulling vapors
 And the sober evening air,
 The spirit of the swarthy Moor
 Is fiercely kindled up.

One hand is on his pistol
 On its ornate scabbard,
 With his finger feels the trigger
 And is busy with the lock —
 The other rocks his ataghan,
 And clasps its jewell'd hilt —
 O'er much of gore in days of yore
 That crooked blade has spilt!

His brows are knit, his eyes of jet
 In vivid blackness roll,
 And gleam with fatal flashes
 Like the fire-damp of the coal;

His jaws are set, and through his teeth
He draws a savage breath,
As if about to raise the shout
Of Victory or Death!

For why? the last Zubeck that came
And moor'd within the Mole,
Such tidings unto Tunis brought
As stir his very soul—
The cruel pit of civil war,
The sad and stormy reign,
That blackens like a thunder cloud
The sunny land of Spain!

No strife of glorious Chivalry,
For honour's gain or loss,
Nor yet that ancient rivalry,
The Crescent with the Cross.
No charge of gallant Paladins
On Moslems stern and staunch;
But Christians shedding Christian blood
Beneath the olive's branch!

A war of horrid parricide,
And brother killing brother;
Yea, like to "dogs and sons of dogs"
That worry one another.

But let them bite and tear and fight,
The more the Kaffers slay,
The sooner Hagar's swarming sons
Shall make the land a prey!

The sooner shall the Moor behold
Th' Alhambra's pile again;
And those who pined in Barbary
Shall shout for joy in Spain—
The sooner shall the Crescent wave
On dear Granada's walls.
And proud Mohammed Ali sit
Within his father's halls!

"Alla-il-alla!" tiger-like
Up springs the swarthy Moor,
And, with a wide and hasty stride,
Steps o'er the marble floor;
Across the hall, till from the wall,
Where such quaint patterns be,
With eager hand he snatches down
An old and massive Key!

A massive Key of curious shape,
And dark with dirt and rust,
And well three weary centuries
The metal might encrust!

For since the King Boabdil fell
Before the native stock,
That ancient Key, so quaint to see,
Hath never been in lock.

Brought over by the Saracens
Who fled across the main,
A token of the secret hope,
Of going back again;
From race to race, from hand to hand,
From house to house it pass'd;
O will it ever, ever open
The Palace gate at last?

Three hundred years and fifty-two
On post and wall it hung —
Three hundred years and fifty-two
A dream to old and young;
But now a brighter destiny
The Prophet's will accords:
The time is come to scour the rust,
And lubricate the wards.

For should the Moor with sword and lance
At Algeiras land,
Where is the bold Bernardo now
Their progress to withstand?

To Burgos should the Moslem come,
Where is the noble Cid
Five royal crowns to topple down
As gallant Diaz did?

Hath Xeres any Pounder now,
When other weapons fail,
With club to thrash invaders rash,
Like barley with a flail?
Hath Seville any Perez still,
To lay his clusters low,
And ride with seven turbans green
Around his saddle-bow?

No! never more shall Europe see
Such Heroes brave and bold
Such Valour, Faith, and Loyalty,
As used to shine of old!
No longer to one battle cry
United Spaniards run,
And with their thronging spears uphold
The Virgin and her Son!

From Cadiz Bay to rough Biscay
Internal discord dwells,
And Barcelona bears the scars
Of Spanish shot and shells.

The fleets decline, the merchants pine
For want of foreign trade ;
And gold is scant ; and Alicante
Is seal'd by strict blockade !

The loyal fly, and Valour falls,
Opposed by court intrigue ;
But treachery and traitors thrive,
Upheld by foreign league ;
While factions seeking private ends
By turns usurping reign—
Well may the dreaming, scheming Moor
Exulting point to Spain !

Well may he cleanse the rusty Key
With Aric sand and oil,
And hope an Andalusian home
Shall recompense the toil !
Well may he swear the Moorish spear
Though wild Castile shall sweep,
And where the Catalonian sowed
The Saracen shall reap !

Well may he vow to spurn the Cross
Beneath the Arab hoof,
And plant the Crescent yet again
Above th' Alhambra's roof—

When those from whom St. Jago's name
In chorus once arose,
Are shouting Faction's battle-cries,
And Spain forgets to "Close!"

Well may he swear his ataghan
Shall rout the traitor swarm,
And carve them into Arabesques
That show no human form—
The blame be theirs whose bloody feuds
Invite the savage Moor,
And tempt him with the ancient Key
To seek the ancient door!

A DREAM.

'Twas night—the Globe was folded up,
(The paper, not the earth,)
And to its proper shelf restored
The fairest "Maid of Perth:"
But still with strange intricacy
The things that I had read—
The Irish News, the Scottish Tale—
Kept running in my head;
While over all a sort of mist
Began to slowly creep,

The twilight haze of Thought, before
It darkens into Sleep:
A foggy land where shady shapes
Kept stirring in the gloom,
Till with a hint of brighter tint
One spot began to bloom,
And on the blank, by dreamy prank,
I saw a Figure tall,
As vivid as from painted glass,
Projected on a wall!

The face as well as I could trace,
Two sparkling eyes were there,
Black as the beard, and trim moustache,
And curling head of hair;
The nose was straight, the mouth was large,
The lips disclosed beneath
A set, full white and regular,
Of strong and handsome teeth—
The whiter, that his brow and cheek,
And thick uncovered gorge,
Were ruddy as if baked by heat
Of sun or glowing forge.

His dress was buff, or some such stuff,
And belted at the waist;
A curious dirk, for stabbing work,
Was in the girdle placed,

Besides a sort of pouch or purse
Of some wild creature's skin,
To safely hold his store of gold
Or silver coin therein :—
But—suddenly his doublet changed
To one of brighter hue,
A jerkin fair and superfine,
Of cloth of a rare blue,
Slash'd front and back with satin black,
Embroider'd o'er and laced
With sable silk, as used to suit
The ancient time and taste ;
His hose were of the Flemish cut,
His boots of Cordovan ;
A velvet bonnet on his head,
Like that of Scottish man,—
Nay, not a velvet one,—for why,
As dreams are apt to deal,
With sudden change, as swift as strange,
It shone a cap of steel !

His coat of buff, or azare stuff,
Became a hauberk bright,
No longer gay in his array,
But harness'd for the Fight !
Huge was his frame, and muscular,
Indicative of strength ;
His bosom broad, his brawny arms
Of more than common length ;

And well the sturdy limbs might be
So sinewy, stark, and strong,
That had to wield in battle-field
A sword so broad and long !
Few men there were of mortal mould,
Although of warlike trade,
But had been rash to stand the crash
Of that tremendous blade ;
And yet aloft he swang it oft,
As if of feather weight,
And cut amid the empty air
A monstrous figure eight ;
Whilst ever, as it cleft the wind,
A whisper came therewith,
That low and clear, said in my ear,
" Behold the Fighting South ! "

And lo ! another " change came o'er
The spirit of my dream - "
The hauberk bright no longer shone
With that metallic gleam—
No ruddy visage furnace-scorch'd,
With glowing eyes, was there,
No sable beard, no trim moustache,
Nor head of raven hair ;
No steely cap, with plume mayhap
No bonnet small or big ;
Upon his brow there settled now
A curly powder'd Wig !

Beneath the chin two cambric bands
 Demurely drooped adown ;
 And from his brawny shoulders hung
 A black forensic gown.
 No mail beneath, to guard from death,
 Or wounds in battle dealt,
 Not ready dirk for stabbing work,
 Dependent at his belt—
 His right hand bore no broad claymore,
 But with a flourish, soon
 He waved a Pistol huge enough
 For any horse-dragon,
 And whilst he pointed to and fro,
 As if to aim therewith,
 Still in my ear, the voice was clear,
 "Behold the Fighting Smith!"

 STANZAS.

FAREWELL, Life! My senses swim
 And the world is growing dim ;
 Thronging shadows cloud the light,
 Like the advent of the night,—
 Colder, colder, colder still
 Upwards steals a vapour chill—
 Strong the earthly odour grows—
 I smell the Mould above the Rose!

THE WORKHOUSE CLOCK.

323

Welcome, Life! the Spirit strives!
Strength returns, and hope revives;
Cloudy fears and shapes forlorn
Fly like shadows at the morn,—
O'er the earth there comes a bloom—
Sunny light for sullen gloom,
Warm perfume for vapour cold—
I smell the Rose above the Mould!

THE WORKHOUSE CLOCK.

AN ALLEGORY.

THERE'S a murmur in the air,
And noise in every street—
The murmur of many tongues,
The noise of numerous feet—
While round the Workhouse door
The Labouring Classes flock,
For why? the Overseer of the Poor
Is setting the Workhouse Clock.
Who does not hear the tramp
Of thousands speeding along
Of either sex and various stamp,
Sickly, crippled, or strong,

Walking, limping, creeping
From court, and alley, and lane,
But all in one direction sweeping
Like rivers that seek the main?

Who does not see them sally
From mill, and garret, and room,
In lane, and court and alley,
From homes in poverty's lowest valley,
Furnished with shuttle and loom—
Poor slaves of Civilization's galleys—
And in the road and footways rally,
As if for the Day of Doom
Some, of hardly human form,
Stunted, crooked, and crippled by toil,
Dingy with smoke and dust and oil,
And smother'd lesions with vicious soil
Clustering, mustering, all in a swarm.
Father, mother, and careful child,
Looking as if it had never smiled—
The Sempstress, lean, and weary, and wan,
With only the ghosts of garments on—
The Weaver, her sallow neighbour,
The grim and sooty Artisan;
Every soul—child, woman, or man,
Who lives—or dies—by labour.

Stir'd by an overwhelming zeal,
And social impulse, a terrible throng

Leaving shuttle, and needle, and wheel,
Furnace, and grindstone, spindle, and reel,
Thread, and yarn, and iron, and steel—
Yea, rest and the yet untasted meal—
Gushing, rushing, crushing along,
A very torrent of Man;
Urged by the sighs of sorrow and wrong,
Grown at last to a hurricane strong,
Stop its course who can!
Stop who can its onward course
And irresistible moral force;
O! vain and idle dream!
For surely as men are all akin,
Whether of fair or sable skin,
According to Nature's scheme,
That Human Movement contains within
A Blood-Power stronger than Steam.

Onward, onward, with hasty feet,
They swarm—and westward still—
Masses born to drink and eat,
But starving amidst Whitechapel's meat,
And famishing down Cornhill!
Through the Poultry—but still unfed—
Christian Charity, hang your head!
Hungry—passing the Street of Bread;
Thirsty—the street of Milk;
Ragged—beside the Ludgate Mart,

326 THE TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFONT.

So gorgeous, through Mechanic-Art,
With cotton, and wool, and silk !

At last, before that door
That bears so many a knock
Ere ever it opens to Sick or Poor,
Like sheep they huddle and flock—
And would that all the Good and Wise
Could see the Million of hollow eyes,
With a gleam deriv'd from Hope and the skies,
Upturn'd to the Workhouse Clock !

Oh ! that the Parish Powers,
Who regulate Labour's hours,
The daily amount of human trial,
Weariness, pain, and self-denial
Would turn from the artificial dial
That striketh ten or eleven,
And go, for once, by that dial one
That stands in the light of Nature's sun,
And takes its time from Heaven !

THE TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFONT.

ALAS ! That breathing Vanity should go
Where Pride is buried —like its very ghost,
Uprisen from the naked bones below,
In novel flesh, clad in the silent boast

THE TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFONT. 327

Of gaudy silk that flutters to and fro,
Shedding its chilling superstition most
On young and ignorant natures—as it wont
To haunt the peaceful churchyard of Bedfont!

Each Sabbath morning, at the hour of prayer,
Behold two maidens, up the quiet green
Shining far distant, in the summer air
That flaunts their dewy robes and breathes between
Their downy plumes,—sailing as if they were
Two far-off ships,—until they brush between
The churchyard's humble walls, and watch and wait
On either side of the wide open'd gate.

And there they stand—with haughty necks before
God's holy house, that points towards the skies—
Frowning reluctant duty from the poor,
And tempting homage from unthoughtful eyes:
And Youth looks lingering from the temple door,
Breathing its wishes in unfruitful sighs,
With pouting lips,—forgetful of the grace,
Of health, and smiles, on the heart-conscious face;—

Because that Wealth, which has no bliss beside,
May wear the happiness of rich attire;
And those two sisters, in their silly pride,
May change the soul's warm glances for the fire

328 THE TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFONT.

Of lifeless diamonds ;—and for health denied,—

With art, that blushes at itself, inspire
Their languid cheeks—and flourish in a glory
That has no life in life, nor after-story.

The aged priest goes shaking his grey hair

In nockest censuring, and turns his eye
Earthward in grief, and heavenward in pray'r,
And sighs, and clasps his hands, and passes by.
Good-hearted man! what sullen soul would wear
Thy sorrow for a garb, and constantly
Put on thy censure, that might win the praise
Of one so grey in goodness and in days?

Also the solemn clerk partakes the shame

Of this ungodly time of human pride,
And sadly blends his reverence and blame
In one grave bow, and passes with a stride
Impatient—many a red-hooded dame
Turns her pain'd head, but not her glance, aside
From wanton dress, and marvels o'er again,
That heaven hath no wet judgments for the vain.

“I have a lily in the bloom at home,”

Quoth one, “and by the blessed Sabbath day
I'll pluck my lily in its pride, and come
And read a lesson upon vain array ;—

And when stiff silks are rustling up, and some
Give place, I'll shake it in proud eyes and say—
Making my reverence,—‘Ladies, an you please
King Solomon's not half so fine as these.’”

Then her meek partner, who has nearly run
His earthly course,—‘Nay, Goody, let your text
Grow in the garden.—We have only one—
Who knows that these dim eyes may see the next?
Summer will come again, and summer sun,
And lilies too,—but I were sorely vexed
To mar my garden, and cut short the blow
Of the last lily I may live to grow.’

“The last!” quoth she, “and though the last it were—
Let those two wantons, where they stand so proud
With waving plumes, and jewels in their hair,
And painted cheeks, like Dragons to be low'd
And curtsy'd to!—last Sabbath after pray'r,
I heard the little Tomkins ask aloud
If they were angels—but I made him know
God's bright ones better, with a bitter blow!”

So speaking, they pursue the pebbly walk
That leads to the white porch the Sunday throng,
Hand-coupled urchins in restrained talk,
And anxious pedagogue that chastens wrong,

330 THE TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFONT.

And posied churchwarden with solemn stalk,
And gold-bedizen'd beadle flames along,
And gentle peasant clad in buff and green,
Like a meek cowslip in the spring serene;

And blushing maiden—modestly array'd
In spotless white,—still conscious of the glass;
And she, the lonely widow, that hath made
A sable covenant with grief,—alas!
She veils her tears under the deep, deep shade,
While the poor kindly hearted, as they pass,
Bend to unclouded childhood, and caress
Her boy,—so cosy!—and so fatherless!

Thus, as good Christians ought, they all draw near
The fair white temple, to the lonely call
Of pleasant bells that tinkle in the ear.—
Now the lost frock, and scarlet hood, and shawl
Fade into dusk, in the dim atmosphere
Of the low porch, and heav'n has won them all,
—Saving those two, that turn aside and pass,
In velvet blossom, where all flesh is grass.

Ah me! to see their silken manors trail'd
In purple luxuries—with restless gold,—
Flourishing the grass where widowhood has wait'd
In blotched black,—over the heapy mould

THE TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFONT. 331

Panting wave-wantonly ! They never quail'd
How the warm vanity abused the cold ;
Nor saw the solemn faces of the gone
Sadly uplooking through transparent stone .

But swept their dwellings with unquiet light,
Shocking the awful presence of the dead ;
Where gracious natures would thine eyes benight
Nor wear their being with a lip too red,
Nor move too rudely in the summer bright
Of sun, but put sad sorrow in their tread,
Meting it into steps, with inward breath.
In very pity to bereaved death.

Now in the church, time-sober'd minds resign
To solemn prayer, and the loud chaunted hymn,—
With glowing picturings of joys divine
Painting the mist-light where the roof is dim
But youth looks upward to the window shine,
Warming with rose and purple and the swim
Of gold, as if thought-tinted by the stains
Of gorgeous light through many-colour'd panes ;

Soiling the virgin snow wherein God hath
Enrobed his angels,— and with absent eyes
Hearing of Heav'n, and its directed path,
Thoughtful of slippers,—and the glorious skies

332 THE TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFORD

Clouding with satin,—till the preacher's wrath
Consumes his pity, and he glows, and cries
With a deep voice that trembles in its might,
And earnest eyes grown eloquent in light :

“ Oh, that the vacant eye would learn to look
On very beauty, and the heart embrace
True loveliness, and from this holy book
Drink the warm-breathing tenderness and grace
Of love indeed ! Oh, that the young soul took
Its virgin passion from the glorious face
Of fair religion, and address'd its wife,
To win the riches of eternal life !

“ Dost the vain heart love glory that is none,
And the poor excellence of vain attire ?
Oh go, and drown your eyes against the sun,
The visible ruler of the starry quire,
Till boiling gold in giddy circles run,
Dazzling the brain with coils of living fire ;
And the faint soul down-starkens into night,
And dies a burning martyrdom to light.

“ Oh go, and gaze,—when the low winds of ev'n
Breathe hymns, and Nature's many forests nod
Their gold-crown'd heads ; and the rich blooms of heav'n
Sun-ripen'd give their blushes up to God ;

THE TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFONT. 333

And mountain-rocks and cloudy steeps are riv'n
By founts of fire, as smitten by the rod
Of heavenly Moses,—that your thirsty sense
May quench its longings of magnificence!

“Yet suns shall perish—stars shall fade away
Day into darkness—darkness into death—
Death into silence; the warm light of day,
The blooms of summer, the rich glowing breath
Of even—all shall wither and decay,
Like the frail furniture of dreams beneath
The touch of morn—or bubbles of rich dyes
That break and vanish in the aching eyes.”

They hear, soul-blushing, and repentant, feel
Unwholesome thoughts in wholesome tears, and pour
Their sin to earth,—and with low drooping head
Receive the solemn blessing, and implore
Its grace—then soberly with charn'd tread,
They meekly press towards the gusty door,
With humbled eyes that go to graze upon
The lowly grass—like him of Babylon.

The lowly grass!—O water-constant mind!
Fast-ebbing holiness!—soon-fading grace
Of serious thought, as if the gushing wind
Through the low porch had wash'd it from the face

334 THE TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFONT

For ever!—How they lift their eyes to find
Old vanities!—Pride wins the very place
Of meekness, like a bird, and flutters now
With idle wings on the curl-conscious brow!

And lo! with eager looks they seek the way
Of old temptation at the lowly gate;
To feast on feathers, and on vain array,
And painted cheeks, and the rich glistening state
Of jewel-sprinkled lock —But where are they.
The graceless haughty ones that used to wait
With lofty neck, and nods, and stiffen'd eye?—
None challenge the old homage bending by.

In vain they look for the ungracious bloom
Of rich apparel where it glow'd before, —
For Vanity has faded all to gloom,
And lofty Pride has stiffen'd to the core,
For impious Life to tremble at its doom,—
Set for a warning token evermore,
Whereon, as now, the giddy and the wise
Shall gaze with lifted hands and wond'ring eyes.

The aged priest goes on each Sabbath morn,
But shakes not sorrow under his grey hair;
The solemn clerk goes lavender'd and shorn
Nor stoops his back to the ungodly pair;—

And ancient lips that pucker'd up in scorn,
Go smoothly breathing to the house of pray'r ;
And in the garden-plot, from day to day,
The lily blooms its long white life away.

And where two haughty maidens used to be,
In pride of plume, where plamy Death had trod,
Trailing their gorgeous velvets wantonly,
Most unmeet pall, over the holy sod ;—
There, gentle stranger, thou may'st only see
Two sombre Peacocks.—Age, with sapient nod
Marking the spot, still taries to declare
How they once lived, and wherefore they are there.

TO A FALSE FRIEND.

Our hands have met, but not our hearts ;
Our hands will never meet again.
Friends, if we have ever been,
Friends we cannot now remain :
I only know I loved you once,
I only know I loved in vain ;
Our hands have met, but not our hearts ,
Our hands will never meet again !

'Then farewell to heart and hand!
 I would our hands had never met:
 Even the outward form of love
 Must be resigned with some regret.
 Friends, we still might seem to be,
 If I my wrong could e'er forget
 Our hands have join'd but not our hearts:
 I would our hands have never met!

FALSE POETS AND TRUE.

TO WORDSWORTH.

Look how the lark soars upward and is gone,
 Turning a spirit as he nears the sky!
 His voice is heard, but body there is none
 To fix the vague excursions of the eye.
 So, poets' songs are with us, tho' they die
 Obscured, and hid by death's oblivious shroud,
 And Earth inherits the rich melody
 Like raining music from the morning cloud.
 Yet, few there be who pipe so sweet and loud
 Their voices reach us through the lapse of space:
 The noisy day is deafen'd by a crowd
 Of undistinguish'd birds, a twittering race;
 But only lark and nightingale forlorn
 Fill up the silences of night and morn.

LYCUS THE CENTAUR.

FROM AN UNROLLED MANUSCRIPT OF APOLLONIUS CURIUS.

Who hath ever been tried and bound by a spell
 To wander, fore-damn'd, in that circle of nell
 Where Witchery works with her will like a god,
 Works more than the wonders of time at a nod,—
 At a word,—at a touch,—at a flash of the eye,
 But each form is a cheat, and each sound is a lie,
 Things born of a wish—to endure for a thought
 Or last for long ages—to vanish to nought,
 Or put on new semblance? O Jove! I had given
 The throne of a kingdom to know if that heaven,
 And the earth and its streams were of Onee, or whether
 They kept the world's birth-day and brighten'd together!
 For I loved them on terror, and constantly dreaded
 That the earth where I stood, and the cave where I bedded,
 The face I might dote on, should live out the lease
 Of the charm that created, and suddenly cease:
 And I gave me to slumber, as if from one dream
 To another—each horrid, and drank of the stream
 Like a first taste of blood, lest as water I quaff'd
 Swift poison, and never should breathe from the draft,—
 Such drink as her own monarch's husband drain'd up
 When he pledged her, and Fate cloud his eyes in the cup.
 And I pluck'd of the fruit with held breath, and a fear
 That the branch would start back and scream out in my
 ear;

For once at my suppering, I pluck'd in the dusk
 An apple juicy, glowing and fragrant of musk ;
 But by daylight my fingers were crimson'd with gore,
 And the half-eaten fragment was flesh at the core ;
 And once — only once — for the love of its blush,
 I took a bloom bough, but there came such a gush
 On my foot, that it fainted away in weak flight,
 While the blood hidden we expected struck'd at the sight
 And oh ! such an agony thrill'd in that note,
 That my soul, starting up, beat its wings in my throat,
 As it long'd to be free of a body whose hand
 Was doom'd to work torments a Feny had plann'd !

There I stood without stir, yet how willing to flee,
 As if rooted and longer-turn'd into a tree.—
 Oh ! for innocent deaths — and to suddenly win it,
 I drank of the stream, but no poison was in it ;
 I plunged in its waters, but ev' I could sink,
 Some invisible fate pull'd me back to the brink ;
 I sprang from the rock, to on its precipice height,
 But fell on the grass with a grasshopper's flight ;
 I ran at my foes — they were fairs and no more,
 For the bear would not maul my limbs, nor the boar,
 But mean'd — all their brut blood flesh could not smother
 The horrible truth, — we were lin'd to each other !

They were mournfully gentle, and group'd for relief,
 All for in their skin, but all friends in their grief :

The leopard was there,---baby-mild in its feature ;
And the tiger, black-bar'd, with the gaze of a creature
That knew gentle pity ; the bristle-back'd boar,
His innocent tusks stained with mulberry gore ;
And the laughing hyena--but laughing no mote ;
And the snake, nor with magical arts to devise
Strange death, but with woman's attraction of eyes ;
The tall ugly ape, that still bore a sun shine
Through his hairy eclipse of a manhood divine ;
And the elephant stately, with more than its reason,
How thoughtful in sadness ! but this is no season
To reckon them up from the lag bellied toad
To the mammoth, whose sobs shook his ponderous load.
There were woe of all shapes, wretched forms, when I
came,
That hung down their heads with a human-like shame ;
The elephant hid in the boughs, and the bear
Shed over his eyes the dark veil of his hair ;
And the womanly soul turning sick with disgust,
Tried to vomit herself from her serpentine crust ;
While all groan'd their groans into one at their lot.
As I brought them the image of what they were not.

Then rose a wild sound of the human voice choking
Through vile brutal organs--low, tremulous croaking ;
Cries swallow'd abruptly--deep animal tones
Attuned to strange passion, and full-utter'd groans ;
All shuddering weaker, till hush'd in a pause
Of tongues in mute motion and wide yawning jaws ;

And I guess'd that those horrors were meant to tell o'er
The tale of their woes ; but the silence told more,
That wish'd on their tongues ; and I knelt on the sod,
And prayed with my voice to the cloud-stirring god,
For the sad congregation of supplicants there,
'That upturn'd to his heaven brute faces of prayer ;
And I ceased and they utter'd a meaning so deep,
'That I wept for my heart-ease,—but they could not weep,
And gaz'd with red eyeballs, all wistfully dry,
At the comfort of tears in a stag's human eye.
'Then I motion'd them round, and, to soothe their distress,
I caress'd, and they bent them to meet my caress,
'Their necks to my arm, and their heads to my palm,
And with poor grateful eyes sail'd meekly and calm
Those tokens of kindness, withheld by hard fate
From returns that might dull the warm pity to hate ;
So they passively bow'd—save the serpent that leapt
'To my breast like a viper, and poisingly crept
In embrace of my neck, and with close kisses blister'd
My lips in rash love,—then drew backward, and glisten'd
Her eyes in my face, and loud hissing affright,
Dropt down, and swift start'd away from my sight!

This sorrow was theirs, but thrice wretched my lot,
'Turn'd brute in my soul, though my body was not,
When I fled from the arrow of womanly faces,
'That shrouded their woe in the shade of lone places,
And dash'd off bright tears, till their fingers were wet,
And then wiped their lids with long tresses of jet :

But I fled—though they stretch'd out their hands, all
entangled

With hair, and blood-stain'd of the breasts they had
mangled,—

Though they call'd —and perchance but to ask, had I seen

Their loves, or to tell the vile wrong, — that had been :

But I stay'd not to hear, lest the story should I hold

Some hell form of words, some enchantment, once told,

Might translate me in flesh to a brute ; and I dreaded

To gaze on their charms, lest my faith should be wedded

With some pity, — and I love in that pity purchase—

To a thing not all lovely ; for once at a glance,

Methought, where one sat, I descried a bright wonder

That flow'd like a long silver rivulet under

The long fenny grass, —with so lovely a breast,

Could it be a snake-tail made the charm of the rest ?

So I roam'd in that circle of horrors, and Fear

Walk'd with me, by hills, and in valleys, and near

Cluster'd trees for their gloom—not to shelter from
heat—

But lest a brute-shadow should grow at my feet ;

And besides that full oft in the sunny place

Dark shadows would gather like clouds on its face,

In the horrible likeness of demons (that none

Could see, like invisible flames in the sun) ;

But grew to one monster that seized on the light,

Like the dragon that strangles the moon in the night ;

Fierce sphinxes, long serpents, and asps of the south ;
Wild birds of huge beak, and all horrors that drouth
Engenders of slime in the land of the pest,
Vile shapes without shape, and foul bats of the West,
Bringing Night on their wings ; and the bodies wherein
Great Brahma imprisons the spirits of sin,
Many-handed, that blent in one phantom of fight
Like a Titan, and threatfully ward with the light ;
I have heard the wild shriek that gave signal to close,
When they rush'd on that shadowy Pythou of foes,
That met with sharp beaks and wide gaping of jaws,
With flappings of wing - and fierce grasping of claws,
And whirls of long tails - - I have seen the quick flutter
Of fragments dis sever'd - and necks stretch'd to utter
Long screamings of pain - - the swift motion of blows,
And wre tling of a mis - to the flight at the close,
When the dust of the earth startled up wards in rings,
And flew on the whirlwind that lov'd their wings.

Thus they fled - not fore often - but often to grow
Like fears in my eyes, when I wail'd to and fro
In the shadows, and felt from some beings unseen
The warm touch of kisses, but clean or unclean
I knew not, nor whether the love I had won
Was of heaven or hell - till one day in the sun,
In its very noon-blaze, I could fancy a thing
Of beauty, but faint as the cloud-mirrors fling
On the gaze of the shepherd that watches the sky,
Half-see and half-dream'd, in the soul of his eye.

And when in my musings I gazed on the stream,
In motionless trances of thought, there would seem
A face like that face, looking upward through mine;
With its eyes full of love, and the dim drowned shine
Of limbs and fair garments, like clouds in that blue
Serene:—there I stood for long hours but to view
Those fond earnest eyes that were ever uplifted
Towards me, and wink'd as the water-wood drifted
Between; but the fish knew that presence, and plied
Their long curvy tails, and swift darted aside.

There I gazed for lost time, and forgot all the
things

That once had been wonders—the fishes with wings,
And the glimmer of magnified eyes that look'd up
From the glooms of the bottom like pearl in a cup,
And the huge endless serpent of silvery gleam,
Slow winding along like a tide in the stream.
Some maid of the waters, some Naiad, methought
Held me dear in the pearl of her eye— and I brought
My wish to that fancy; and often I dash'd
My limbs in the water, and suddenly splash'd
The cool drops around me, yet clung to the brink,
Chill'd by watery fears, how that beauty might sink
With my life in her arms to her garden and bind me
With its long tangled grasses, or cruelly wind me
In some eddy to hum out my life in her ear,
Like a spider-caught bee,—and in aid of that fear

Came the tardy remembrance—Oh falsest of men!
 Why was not that beauty remembered till then?
 My love, my safe love, whose glad life would have run
 Into mine—like a drop—that our fate might be one,
 That now, even now, - may-be,—clasp'd in a dream,
 That form which I gave to some jilt of the stream,
 And gazed with fond eyes that her tears tried to smother
 On a mock of those eyes that I gave to another!

Then I rose from the stream, but the eyes of my mind,
 Still full of the tempter, kept gazing behind
 On her crystalline face, while I painfully leapt
 To the bank, and shook off the court waters, and wept
 With my brow in the reed; and the reeds to my ear
 Bow'd, bent by no wind, and in whispers of fear,
 Growing small with large secrets, let me of one
 That loved me, - but oh to fly from her, and shun
 Her love like a pest—through her love was as true
 To mine as her stream to the heavenly blue;
 For why should I love her with love that would bring
 All misfortune, like hate, or so joyous a thing?
 Because of her rival, - even Her whose witch-face
 I had slighted, and therefore was doom'd in that place
 To roam, and had roam'd, where all horrors grew rank,
 Nine days ere I wept with my brow on that bank;
 Her name be not named, but her spite would not fail
 * To our love like a blight, and they told me the tale
 Of Scylla, - and Picus, imprison'd to speak
 His shrill-screaming woe through a woodpecker's beak.

Then they ceased—I had heard as the voice of my star
That told me the truth of my fortunes—thus far
I had read of my sorrow, and lay in the hush
Of deep meditation,—when lo! a light crush
Of the reeds, and I turn'd and look'd round in the night
Of new sunshine, and saw, as I sipp'd of the light
Narrow-winking, the realised nymph of the stream,
Rising up from the wave with the bend and the gleam
Of a fountain, and o'er her white arms he kept throwing
Bright torrents of hair, that went flowing and flowing
In falls to her feet, and the blue waters roll'd
Down her limbs like a garment, in many a fold,
Sun-spangled, gold-boulder'd and fled far behind,
Like an infinite train. So she came and reclined
In the reeds, and I hunger'd to see her unseal
The buds of her eyes that would open and reveal
The blue that was in them, —they opened and she raised
Two orbs of pure crystal, and timidly gazed
With her eyes on my eyes; but their colour and shine
Was of that which they look'd on, and mostly of mine—
For she loved me,—except when she blush'd, and they
sank,
Shame-humbled, to number the stones on the bank,
Or her play-idle fingers while lip-ping she told me
How she put on her veil, and in love to behold me
Would wing through the sun till she fainted away
Like a mist, and then flew to hot waters and lay
In love-patience long hours, and sore dazzled her eyes
In watching for mine 'gainst the midsummer skies.

But now they were heal'd,—O my heart it still dances
When I think of the charm of her changeable glances,
And my image how small when it sank in the deep
Of her eyes where her soul was, —Alas! now they weep,
And none knoweth where. In what stream do her eyes
Shed invisible tears? Who beholds where her sighs
Flow in eddies, or sees the ascent of the leaf
She has pluck'd with her tresses? Who listens her grief
Like a far fall of waters, or hears where her feet
Grow emphatic among the loose pebbles, and beat
Them together? Ah! surely her flowers float adown
To the sea unaccepted, and little ones drown
For need of her mercy,—even he whose twin-brother
Will miss him for ever; and the sorrowful mother
Implores in vain for his body to kiss
And cling to, all dripping and cold as it is,
Because that soft pity is lost in hard pain!
We loved, how we loved!—for I thought not again
Of the woes that were whisper'd like fears in that place
If I gave me to beauty. Her face was the face
Far away, and her eyes were the eyes that were drown'd
For my absence,—her arms were the arms that sought
round

And claspt me to nought; for I gazed and became
Only true to my falsehood, and had but one name
For two loves, and call'd even on *Aëgle*, sweet maid
Of the sky-loving water, —and was not afraid
Of the sight of her skin;—for it never could be,
Her beauty and love were misfortunes to me!

Thus our bliss had endured for a time-shorten'd space,
Like a day made of three, and the smile of her face
Had been with me for joy,—when she told me indeed
Her love was self-task'd with a work that would need
Some short hours, for in truth 'twas the veriest pity
Our love should not last, and then sang me a ditty,
Of one with warm lips that should love her, and love
her

When suns were burnt dim and long ages past over,
So she fled with her voice, and I patiently nested
My limbs in the reeds, in still quiet, and rested
Till my thoughts grew extinct, and I sank in a sleep
Of dreams,—but their meaning was hidden too deep
To be read what their woe was;—but still it was woe
That was writ on all faces that swam to and fro
In that river of night;—and the gaze of their eyes
Was sad,—and the bend of their brows,—and their cries
Were seen, but I heard not. The warm touch of tears
Travell'd down my cold cheeks, and I shook till my
fears

Awaked me, and lo! I was couch'd in a bower,
The growth of long summers reu'd up in an hour!
Then I said, in the feat of my dream, I will fly
From this magic, but could not, because that my eye
Grew love-idle among the rich blooms; and the earth
Held me down with its coolness of touch, and the mirth
Of some bird was above me,—who, even in fear,
Would startle the thrush? and methought there drew
near

A form as of Ægle,—but it was not the face
Hope made, and I knew the witch-Queen of that place,
Even Circe the Cruel, that came like a Death
Which I fear'd, and yet fled not, for want of my breath.
There was thought in her face, and her eyes were not raised
From the grass at her foot, but I saw, as I gazed,
Her spite— and her countenance changed with her mind
As she plann'd how to thral me with beauty, and bind
My soul to her charms,—and her long tresses play'd
From shade into shine and from shine into shade,
Like a day in mid-autumn, — first fair, O how fair!
With long snaky locks of the adder-black hair
That clung round her neck, — those dark locks that I prize,
For the sake of a maid that once loved me with eyes
Of that fathomless hue,—but they changed as they roll'd,
And brighten'd, and suddenly blazed into gold
That she comb'd into flames, and the locks that fell down
Turn'd dark as they fell, but I lighted their brown,
Not loved, till I saw the light ringlets shed wild,
That innocence wears when she is but a child;
And her eyes,—Oh I ne'er had been witch'd with their
shine,
Had they been any other, my Ægle, than thine!

Then I gave me to magic, and gazed till I madden'd
In the full of their light. —but I sadden'd and sadden'd
The deeper I look'd, —till I sank on the snow
Of her bosom, a thing made of terror and woe,

And answer'd its throb with the shudder of fears,
And hid my cold eyes from her eyes with my tears,
And strain'd her white arms with the still languid
weight

Of a fainting distress. There she sat like the Fate
That is nurse unto Death, and bent over in shame
To hide me from her--the true *Ægle*--that came
With the words on her lips the false witch had fore-
given

To make me immortal--for now I was even
At the portals of Death, who but waited the hush
Of world-sounds in my ear to cry welcome, and rush
With my soul to the banks of his black flowing river.
Oh, would it had flown for my body for ever,
Ere I listen'd those words, when I felt with a start,
The life-blood rush back in one throb to my heart,
And saw the pale lips where the rest of that spell
Had perish'd in horror--and heard the farewell
Of that voice that was drown'd in the dash of the
stream!

How fain had I follow'd and plunged with that scream
Into death, but my being indignantly lagg'd
Through the brutalised flesh that I painfully dragg'd
Behind me:--"O Chce! O mother of spite!
Speak the last of that curse? and imprison me quite
In the husk of a brute,--that no pity may name
The man that I was,--that no kindred may claim
The monster I am! Let me utterly be
Brute-buried, and Nature's dishonour with me

Uninscribed!"—But she listen'd my prayer, that was
praise

To her malice, with smiles, and advised me to gaze
On the river for love,—and perchance she would make
In pity a maid without eyes for my sake
And she left me like Scorn. Then I ask'd of the wave,
What monster I was, and it trembled and gave
The true shape of my grief, and I turn'd with my face
From all waters for ever, and fled through that place,
Till with horror more strong than all magic I pass'd
Its bounds, and the world was before me at last.

There I wander'd in sorrow, and shunn'd the abodes
Of men, that stood up in the likeness of Gods,
But I saw from afar the warm shine of the sun
On their cities, where man was a million, not one;
And I saw the white smoke of their altars ascending,
That show'd where the hearts of the many were blending,
And the wind in my face brought shrill voices that came
From the trumpets that gather'd whole bands in one
fame

As a chorus of man,—and they streamed from the gates
Like a dusky libation pour'd out to the Fates.
But at times there were gentler processions of peace
That I watch'd with my soul in my eyes till their cease,
There were women! there men! but to me a third sex
I saw them all dots—yet I loved them as specks:
And oft to requage a sad yearning of eyes
I stole near the city, but stole covert-wise

Like a wild beast of love, and perchance to be smitten
By some hand that I rather had wept on than bitten!
Oh, I once had a haunt near a cot where a mother
Daily sat in the shade with her child, and would smother
Its eyelids in kisses, and then in its sleep
Sang dreams in its ear of its manhood, while deep
In a thicket of willows I gazed o'er the brooks
That murmur'd between us and hiss'd them with looks;
But the willows unbosom'd their secret, and never
I return'd to a spot I had startled for ever,
Though I oft long'd to know, but could ask it of none,
Was the mother still fair, and how big was her son?

For the hunters of fields they all shunn'd me by flight,
The men in their horror, the women in fright;
None ever remain'd save a child once that sported
Among the wild bluebells, and playfully counted
The breeze; and beside him a speckled snake lay
Tight strang'd, because it had hiss'd him away
From the flower at his finger; he rose and drew near
Like a Son of Immortals, one born to no fear,
But with strength of black locks and with eyes azure
bright
To grow to large manhood of merciful might.
He came, with his face of bold wonder, to feel,
The hair of my side, and to lift up my heel,
And question'd my face with wide eyes; but when
under
My lids he saw tears,—for I wept for his wonder,

He stroked me, and utter'd such kindness then,
That the once love of women, the friendship of men
In past sorrow, no kindness e'er came like a kiss
On my heart in its de-solate day such as this!
And I yearn'd at his cheeks in my love, and down bent,
And lifted him up with my arms with intent
To kiss him,—but he cruel-kindly, alas!
Held out to my lips a pluck'd handful of grass!
Then I dropt him in horror, but felt as I fled
The stone he indignantly hurl'd at my head,
That discover'd my ear,—but I felt not, whose fate
Was to meet more distress in his love than his hate!

Thus I wander'd companion'd of grief and forlorn
Till I wish'd for that land where my being was born,
But what was that land with its love, where my home
Was self-shut against me for why should I come
Like an after-distress to my grey-bearded father,
With a blight to the last of his sight? —let him rather
Lament for me dead, and shed tears in the urn
Where I was not, and still in fond memory turn
To his son even such as he left him. —Oh, how
Could I walk with the youth once my fellows, but now
Like Gods to my humbled estate? —or how bear
The steeds once the pride of my eyes and the care
Of my hands? Then I turn'd me self banish'd, and came
Into Thessaly here, where I met with the same
As myself. I have heard how they met by a stream
In games, and were suddenly changed by a scream

That made wretches of many, as she roll'd her wild eyes
Against heaven, and so vanish'd.—The gentle and wise
Lose their thoughts in deep studies, and others their ill
In the mirth of mankind where they mingle them still.

SONNET

FOR THE 14TH OF FEBRUARY.

No popular respect will I omit
To do thee honour on this happy day,
When every loyal lover tasks his wit
His simple truth in studious rhymes to pay,
And to his mistress dear his hopes convey.
Rather thou knowest I would still outrun
All calendars with Love's,—whose date alway
'Thy bright eyes govern better than the Sun,—
For with thy favour was my life begun ;
And still I reckon on from smiles to smiles,
And not by summers, for I thrive on none
But those thy cheerful countenance compiles :
Oh ! if it be to choose and call thee mine,
Love, thou art every day my Valentine.

MORAL REFLECTIONS ON THE CROSS OF
ST. PAUL'S.

The man that pays his pence, and goes
Up to thy lofty cross, St. Paul,
Looks over London's naked nose,
Women and men :
The world is all beneath his ken,
He sits above the *Ball*
He seems on Mount Olympus' top,
Among the Gods, by Jupiter ! and lets drop
His eyes from the empyreal clouds
On mortal crowds.

Seen from these skies,
How small those emmets in our eyes !
Some carry little sticks—and one
His eggs—to warm them in the sun :
Dear ! what a hustle.
And bustle !

And there's my aunt. I know her by her waist,
So long and thin,
And so pinch'd in,
Just in the pismire taste.

Oh ! what are men ?—Beings so small,
That, should I fall
Upon their little heads, I must
Crush them by hundreds into dust !

And what is life? and all its ages—

There's seven stages!

Turnham Green! Chelsea! Putney! Fulham!

Brentford! and Kew!

And Tooting, too!

And oh! what very little nags to pull 'em.

Yet each would seem a horse indeed,

If here at Paul's tip-top we'd got 'em;

Although like Cinderella's breed,

They're mice at bottom.

Then let me not despise a horse,

Though he looks small from Paul's high cross;

Since he would be,—as near the sky,

—Fourteen hands high.

What is this world with London in its lap?

Mogg's Map.

The Thames, that ebbs and flows in its broad channel

A *tidy* kennel.

The bridges stretching from its banks?

Stone planks.

Oh me! hence could I read an admonition

To mad Ambition!

But that he would not listen to my call,

Though I should stand upon the cross, and *ball!*



THE MERMAID OF MARGATE.

ON Margate beach, where the sick one roams,
And the sentimental reads ;
Where the maiden flirts, and the widow comes—
Like the ocean—to cast her weeds ;—

Where urchins wander to pick up shells,
And the Cit to spy at the ships,—
Like the water gala at Sadler's Wells,—
And the Chandler for watery dips ;—

There's a maiden sits by the ocean brim,
As lovely and fair as sin !
But woe, deep water and voc to him,
That she snareth like Peter Fin !

Her head is crown'd with pretty sea-wares,
And her locks are golden and loose ;
And seek to her feet, like other folks' heirs,
To stand, of course, in her shoes !

And all day long, she combeth them well,
With a sea shark's prickly jaw ;
And her mouth is just like a rose-lipp'd shell,
The fairest that man e'er saw !

And the Fishmonger, humble as love may be,
 Hath planted his seat by her side ;
 " Good even, fair maid ! Is thy lover at sea,
 To make thee so watch the tide ? "

She turn'd about with her pearly brows ;
 And clasp'd him by the hand :—
 " Come, love, with me ; I've a bonny house
 On the golden Goodwin Sand. "

And then she gave him a siren kiss,
 No honeycomb e'er was sweeter :
 Poor wretch ! how little he dreamt for this
 That Peter should be salt-Peter ;

And away with her prize to the wave she leapt,
 Not walking, as damsels do,
 With toe and heel, as she ought to have stept,
 But she hopt like a Kangaroo !

One plunge, and then the victim was blind,
 Whilst they gallop'd across the tide :
 At last on the bank he waked in his mind,
 And the Beauty was by his side.

One half on the sand, and half in the sea,
 But his air all began to stiffen ;
 For when he looked where her feet should be,
 She had no more feet than Miss Biffen !

But a scaly tail of a dolphin's growth
In the dabbling brine did soak.
At last she open'd her pearly mouth,
Like an oyster, and thus she spoke:—

“You crimp't my father who was a skate;—
And my sister you sold—a maid;
So here remain for a fishlike fate,
For lost you are, and betray'd!”

And away she went, with a seagull's scream,
And a splash of her saucy tail;
In a moment he lost the silvery gleam
That shone on her splendid mail!

The sun went down with a blood-red flame,
And the sky grew cloudy and black,
And the tumbling billows like leap-frog came,
Each over the other's back!

Ah, me! it had been a beautiful scene,
With the safe terra-firma round;
But the green water-hillocks all seem'd to him,
Like those in a churchyard ground;

And Christians love in the turf to lie,
Not in watery graves to be:
Nay, the very fishes will sooner die
On the land than in the sea;

And whilst he stood, the watery strife
Encroached on every hand,
And the ground decreas'd—his moments of life
Seen'd measur'd, like 'Time's, by sand ;

And still the waters foam'd in, like ale,
In front and on either flank,
He knew that Goodwin and Co. must fail,
There was such a run on the bank.—

A little more, and a little more,
The surges came tumbling in ;
He sang the evening hymn twice o'er,
And thought of every sin !

Each flounder and plaice lay cold at his heart,
As cold as his marble slab ;
And he thought he felt in every part
'The pincers of scalded crab.

The squealing lobsters that he had boil'd,
And the little potted shrimps,
All the horny prawns he had ever spoil'd,
Gnaw'd into his soul, like imps !

And the billows were wandering to and fro,
And the glorious sun was sunk,
And Day, getting black in the face, as tho'
Of the night-shade she had drunk !

Had there been but a smuggler's cargo adrift
One tub, or keg, to be seen,
It might have given his spirits a lift
Or an *anker* where *Hope* might lean!

But there was not a box or a beam afloat,
To raft him from that sad place ;
Not a skiff, nor a yawl, or a mackerel boat,
Nor a smack upon Neptune's face.

At last, his lingering hopes to buoy,
He saw a sail and a mast,
And called "Ahoy !" —but it was not a hoy,
And so the vessel went past.

And with saucy wing that flapp'd in his face,
The wild bird about him flew.
With a shrilly scream that twitted his case,
"Why, thou art a sea-gull too !"

And lo! the tide was over his feet ;
Oh ! his heart began to freeze,
And slowly to pulse :—in another beat
The wave was up to his knees !

He was deafen'd amidst the mountain-top,
And the salt spray blinded his eyes,
And wash'd away the other salt-drop,
That grief had caused to arise ;—

But just as his body was all afloat
And the surges above him broke,
He was saved from the hungry deep by a boat,
Of Deal—(but builded of oak).

The skipper gave him a dram, as he lay,
And chafed his shivering skin;
And the angel returned that was flying away
With the spirit of Peter Fia!

A VALENTINE.

Oh! cruel heart! ere these posthumous papers
Have met thine eyes, I shall be out of breath:
Those cruel eyes, like two funeral tapers,
Have only lighted me the way to death.
Perchance, thou wilt extinguish them in vapours,
When I am gone, and green grass covereth
Thy lover, lost; but it will be in vain—
It will not bring the vital spark again.

Ah! when those eyes, like tapers, burn'd so blue,
It seemed an omen that we must expect
The sprites of lovers; and it boded true,
For I am half a sprite—a ghost elect;
Wherefore I write to thee this last adieu,
With my last pen—before that I effect
My exit from the stage; just stopp'd before
The tombstone steps that lead us to death's door.

Full soon these living eyes, now liquid bright,
Will turn dead dull, and wear no radiance, save
They shed a dreary and inhuman light,
Illum'd within by glow-worms of the grave;
These ruddy cheeks, so pleasant to the sight,
These lusty legs, and all the limbs I have,
Will keep death's carnival, and, foul or fresh,
Must bid farewell, a long farewell, to flesh!

Yea, and this very heart, that dies for thee
As broken victuals to the worms will go;
And all the world will dine again but me—
For I shall have no stomach;—and I know,
When I am ghostly, thou wilt sprightly be
As now thou art; but wilt not tears of woe
Water thy spirits, with remorse adjunct,
When thou dost pause, and think of the defunct?

And when thy soul is buried in a sleep,
In midnight solitude, and little dreaming
Of such a spectre—what, if I should creep
Within thy presence in such dismal seeming;
Thine eyes will stare themselves awake, and weep.
And thou wilt cross thyself with treble screaming,
And pray with mingled penitence and dread
That I were less alive—or not so dead.

Then will thy heart confess thee, and reprove
This wilful homicide which thou hast done :
And the sad epitaph of so much love
Will eat into my heart, as if in stone :
And all the lovers that around thee move,
Will read my fate, and tremble for their own ;
And strike upon their heartless breasts, and sigh,
“ Man, born of woman, must of woman die ! ”

Mine eyes grow dropsical—I can no more—
And what is written thou may'st seem to read,
Shutting thy tearless eyes.—’Tis done—’tis o’er—
My hand is destin’d for another deed
But one last word wrung from its aching core,
And my lone heart in silentness will bleed !
Alas ! it ought to take a life to tell
That one last word—that fare—fare—fare thee well !

TIME, HOPE, AND MEMORY.

I HEARD a gentle maiden, in the spring,
Set her sweet sighs to music, and thus sing :
“ Fly through the world, and I will follow thee,
Only for looks that may turn back on me ;

"Only for roses that your chance may throw—
 Though wither'd—I will wear them on my brow,
 To be a thoughtful fragrance to my brain,—
 Warm'd with such love, that they will bloom again.

"Thy love before thee, I must tread behind,
 Kissing thy footprints, though to me unkind;
 But trust not all her fondness, though it seem,
 Lest thy true love should rest on a false dream.

"Her face is smiling, and her voice is sweet;
 But smiles betray, and music sings deceit;
 And words speak false;—yet, if they welcome prove,
 I'll be their echo, and repeat their love.

"Only if waken'd to sad truth, at last,
 The bitterness to come, and sweetness past;
 When thou art vent, then turn again, and see
 Thou hast loved Hope, but Memory loved thee."

HERO AND LEANDER.

TO S. T. COLERIDGE.

It is not with a hope my feeble praise
 Can add one moment's honour to thy own,
 That with thy mighty name I grace these lays;
 I seek to glorify myself alone.
 For that some precious favour thou hast shown
 To my endeavour in a by-gone time,

And by this token I would have it known
Thou art my friend, and friendly to my rhyme !
It is my dear ambition now to climb
Still higher in thy thought,—if my bold pen
May thrust on contemplations more sublime.—
But I am thirsty for thy praise, for when
We gain applauses from the great in name,
We seem to be partakers of *their* fame.

On Bards of old ! what sorrows have ye sung,
And tragic stories, chronicled in stone,—
Sad Philomel restored her ravish'd tongue,
And transform'd Niobe in dumbness shown ;
Sweet Sappho on her love for ever culls,
And Hero on the drown'd Leander falls !

Was it that spectacles of sadder plights
Should make our blisses relish the more high ?
Then all fair dames, and maidens, and true knights
Whose flourish'd fortunes prosper in Love's eye,
Weep here, unto a tale of Ancient grief,
Traced from the course of an old bas-relief.

There stands Abydos !—here is Sestos' steep,
Hard by the gusty margin of the sea,
Where sprinkling waves continually do leap •
And that is where those famous lovers be,
A builded gloom shot up into the grey,
As if the first tall watch tow'r of the day.

Lo! how the lark soars upward and is gone ;
Turning a spirit as he nears the sky,
His voice is heard, though body there is none,
And rain-like music scatters from on high ;
But Love would follow with a falcon spire,
To pluck the minstrel from his dewy height.

For Love hath framed a ditty of regrets,
Tuned to the hollow sobbings on the shore,
A vexing sense, that with like music frets,
And chimes this dismal lullaby o'er and o'er,
Saying Leander's joys are past and spent,
Like stars extinguish'd in the firmament.

For ere the golden crevices of morn
Let in those regal luxuries of light,
Which all the variable east adorn,
And hang rich fringes on the skirts of night,
Leander, weaning from sweet Hero's side,
Must leave a widow where he found a bride.

Hark ! how the billows beat upon the sand !
Like pawing steeds impatient of delay ;
Meanwhile their rider, ling'ring on the land,
Dallies with love, and holds farewell at bay
A too short span.—How tedious slow is grief !
But parting renders time both sad and brief.

"Alas!" he sigh'd, "that this first glimpsing light,
Which makes the wide world tenderly appear,
Should be the burning signal for my flight,
From all the world's best image, which is here;
Whose very shadow, in my fond compare,
Shines far more bright than Beauty's self elsewhere."

Their cheeks are white as blossoms of the dark,
Whose leaves close up and show the outward pale,
And those fair mirrors where their joys did spark,
All dim and tarnish'd with a dreary veil,
No more to kindle till the night's return,
Like stars replenish'd at Joy's golden urn.

Ev'n thus they creep into the spectral grey,
That cramps the landscape in its narrow bourn.
As when two shadows by old Lethe stray,
He clasping her, and she entwining him;
Like trees, wind-parted, that embrace anon,—
True love so often goes before 'tis gone.

For what rich merchant but will pause in fear
To trust his wealth to the unsafe abyss?
So Hero dotes upon her treasure here,
And sums the loss with many an anxious kiss,
Whilst her fond eyes grow dizzy in her head,
Fear aggravating fear with shows of dread.

She thinks how many have been sunk and drown'd,
 And spie their snow white bones below the deep,
 Then calls huge congregated monsters round,
 And plant a rock wherever he would leap,
 Anon she dwells on a fantastic dream,
 Which she imagines of that fatal stream.

Saying 'Thou wouldst fly I saw wa' thee,
 Which lighted on a water lily's cup
 When, low'd the flower enchain'd of my bee,
 Closed on him suddenly and clasp'd him up,
 And he was so other and enchained was,
 Therefore this day thy fate will I share.'

Put next renounc'd his virgin form
 She clasp'd him in her arms and bade him go,
 But seeing him break loose she parts her home,
 And pluck him back upon her bosom's snow;
 And tears unfix his soul resolve to run,
 As steadfast fountains have daily hours of sun.

O for a type of parting! Love to love
 Is like the final attraction of two spheres,
 Which needs a god-like effort to remove,
 And then sink down their sunny atmospheres,
 In rain and darkness on each ruin'd heart,
 Nor yet their melodies will sound apart

So brave Leander sunders from his bride;
The wrenching pang disparts his soul in twain;
Half stays with her, half goes towards the tide,—
And life must ache, until they join again.
Now wouldst thou know the wideness of the wound?—
Mete every step he takes upon the ground.

And for the agony and bosom-throe,
Let it be measured by the wide vast air,
For that is infinite, and so is woe,
Since parted lovers breathe it everywhere.
Look how it heaves Leander's labouring chest,
Panting, at point, upon a rocky crest!

From which he leaps into the scooping brine,
That shocks his bosom with a double chill;
Because, all hours, till the slow sun's decline,
That cold divorcee will be twixt them still;
Wherefore he likens it to Styx' foul tide,
Where life grows death upon the other side.

Then sadly he confronts his two-fold toil
Against rude waves and an unwilling mind,
Wishing, alas! with the stout rower's toil,
That like a rower he might gaze behind,
And watch that lonely statue he hath left,
On her bleak summit, weeping and bereft!

Yet turning oft, he sees her troubled locks
Pursue him still the furthest that they may !
Her marble arms that over-stretch the rocks,
And her pale passion'd hands that seem to pray
In dumb petition to the gods above :
Love prays devoutly when it prays for love !

Then with deep sighs he blows away the wave,
That hangs superfluous tears upon his cheek,
And bans his labour like a hopeless slave,
That, chain'd in hostile galley, faint and weak,
Plies on despairing through the restless foam,
Thoughtful of his lost love, and far-off home.

The drowsy mist before him chill and dank,
Like a dull lethargy o'erleaves the sea,
When he rows on against the utter blank,
Steering as if to dim eternity,—
Like Love's frail ghost departing with the dawn ;
A failing shadow in the twilight drawn.

And soon is gone,—or nothing but a faint
And failing image in the eye of thought.
That mocks his model with an after-paint,
And stains an atom like the shape she sought ;
Then with her earnest vows she hopes to fee
The old and hoary majesty of sea,

"O King of waves, and brother of high Jove,
Preserve my sunless venture there afloat ;
A woman's heart, and its whole wealth of love,
Are all embark'd upon that little boat ;
Nay !—but two loves, two lives, a double fate,—
A perilous voyage for so dear a freight.

"If impious mariners be stain'd with crime,
Shake not in awful rage thy hoary locks ;
Lay by thy storms until another time,
Lest my frail bark be dash'd against the rocks :
O rather smooth thy deeps, that he may fly
Like Love himself, upon a seeming sky !

"Let all thy herded monsters sleep beneath,
Nor gore him with crook'd tusks, or wreathed horns ;
Let no fierce sharks destroy him with their teeth,
Nor spine-fish wound him with their venom'd thorns ;
But if he faint, and timely succour lack,
Let ruthless dolphins rest him on their back.

"Let no false dimpling whirlpools suck him in,
Nor slimy quicksands smother his sweet breath ;
Let no jagg'd coral tear his tender skin,
Nor mountain billows bury him in death ;"
And with that thought forestalling her own fears,
She drown'd his painted image in her tears.

By this, the climbing Sun, with rest repair'd,
Look'd through the gold embrasures of the sky,
And ask'd the drowsy world how she had fared;—
The drowsy world shone brighten'd in reply;
And smiling off her fogs, his slanting beam
Spied young Leander in the middle stream.

His face was pallid, but the hectic morn
Had hung a lying crimson on his cheeks,
And slanderous sparkles in his eyes forlorn:
So death lies ambush'd in consumptive streaks;
But inward grief was withing o'er its task,
As heart-sick jesters weep behind the mask.

He thought of Hero and the lost delight,
Her last embracings, and the space between;
He thought of Hero and the future night,
Her speechless rapture and enamour'd mien,
When, lo! before him, scarce two galleys' space,
His thoughts confronted with another face!

Her aspect's like a moon, dimly fair,
But makes the midnight darker that it lies on:
'Tis so beclouded with her coal black hair
That densely skirts her luminous horizon,
Making her doubly fair, thus darkly set,
As marble lies advantaged upon jet.

She's all too bright, too argent, and too pale,
To be a woman ;—but a woman's double,
Reflected on the wave so faint and frail,
She tops the billows like an air-blown bubble ;
Or dim creation of a morning dream,
Fair as the wave-bleach'd lily of the stream.

The very rumour strikes his seeing dead :
Great beauty like great fear first stuns the sense -
He knows not if her lips be blue or red,
Nor of her eyes can give true evidence -
Like murder's witness swooning to the court,
His sight falls senseless by its own report.

Anon resuming, it declares her eyes
Are tint with azure, like two crystal wells
That drink the blue complexion of the skies,
Or pearls outpeeping from their silvery shells :
Her polish'd brow, it is an ample plain,
To lodge vast contemplations of the main.

Her lips might corals seem, but corals near,
Stray through her hair like blossoms on a bower !
And o'er the weaker red still domineer,
And make it pale by tribute to more power ;
Her rounded cheeks are of still paler hue,
Touch'd by the bloom of water, tender blue.

Thus he beholds her rocking on the water,
Under the glossy umbrage of her hair,
Like pearly Amphitrite's fairest daughter,
Naiad, or Nereid, or Syren fair,
Mislodging music in her pitiless breast,
A nightingale within a falcon's nest.

They say there be such maidens in the deep,
Charming poor mariners, that all too near
By mortal lullabies fall dead asleep,
As drowsy men are poi-on'd through the ear ;
Therefore Leander's fears begin to urge,
This snowy swan is come to sing his dirge.

At which he falls into a deadly chill,
And strains his eyes upon her lips apart ;
Fearing each breath to feel that prelude shrill,
Pierce through his marrow, like a death-blown dart
Shot sudden from an Indian's hollow cane,
With mortal venom fraught, and fiery pain.

Here then, poor wretch, how he begins to crowd
A thousand thoughts within a pulse's space ;
There seem'd so brief a pause of life allow'd,
His mind stretch'd universal, to embrace
The whole wide world, in an extreme farewell,—
A moment's musing—but an age to tell.

For there stood Hero, widow'd at a glance,
The foreseen sum of many a tedious fact,
Pale cheeks, dim eyes, and wither'd countenance,
A wasted ruin that no wasting lack'd;
Time's tragic consequents ere time began,
A world of sorrow in a tear-drop's span.

A moment's thinking is an hour in words,—
An hour of words is little for some woes;
Too little breathing a long life affords
For love to paint itself by perfect shows:
Then let his love and grief unwrong'd lie dumb,
Whilst Fear, and that it fears, together come.

As when the crew, hard by some jutting cape,
Struck pale and panick'd by the billows' roar,
Lay by all timely measures of escape,
And let their bark go driving on the shore;
So fray'd Leander, drifting to his wreck,
Gazing on Scylla, falls upon her neck.

For he hath all forgot the swimmer's art,
The rower's cunning, and the pilot's skill,
Letting his arms fall down in languid part,
Sway'd by the waves, and nothing by his will,
Till soon he jars against that glossy skin,
Solid like glass, though seemingly as thin.

Lo! how she startles at the warning shock,
And straightway girds him to her radiant breast,
More like his safe smooth harbour than his rock :
Poor wretch, he is so faint and toil-oppressed,
He cannot loose him from his grappling foe,
Whether for love or hate, she lets not go.

His eyes are blinded with the salty brine,
His ears are deafen'd with the wildering noise ;
He asks the purpose of her fell design,
But foamy waves choke up his struggling voice ;
Under the ponderous sea his body dips,
And Hero's name dies babbling on his lips.

Look how a man is lower'd to his grave --
A yearning hollow in the green earth's lap ;
So he is sunk into the yawning wave --
The plunging sea fills up the watery gap :
Aton he is all gone, and nothing seen
But likeness of green turf and hillocks green.

And where he swam, the constant sun lies sleeping,
Over the verdant plain that makes his bed ;
And all the noisy waves go freshly leaping,
Like gamesome boys over the churchyard dead ;
The light in vain keeps looking for his face :—
Now screaming sea-fowl settle in his place.

Yet weep and watch for him, though all in vain!
 Ye moaning billows, seek him as ye wander!
 Ye gazing sunbeams, look for him again!
 Ye winds, grow loud with asking for Leander!
 Ye did but part him for more cruel rape
 Sea-storm and ruin in a final shape!

She says 'tis love, but still she thinks he's dead
 The glancing of his eyes, the witch her
 O bootles that she thought she had
 Love's treachery, and yet he never
 The sparkling of his eyes, the colour of his
 And all his golden looks are turned to lead!

She holds the cake, but her simple hand
 Hath split it, and it is spoiled by the way!
 She hath life's empty payment at command,
 But her own heart is covetous in the prey,
 As if a thief should steal a tun of silver
 Some dead man's spoil, and sicken of his prey.

Now she compels him to his deeps below,
 Hiding his face beneath her plenteous hair,
 Which jealously she shakes all round his brow,
 For dread of envy, though no eyes are there
 But seals, and all brute tenants of the deep,
 Which heedless through the wave their journey keep

Down and still downward through the dusky green
She bore him, murmuring with joyous haste
In too rash ignorance, as he had been
Born to the texture of that watery waste ;
That which she breathed and sigh'd, the emerald wave !
How could her pleasant home become his grave ?

Down and still downward through the dusky green
She bore her treasure, with a face too nigh
To mark how life was alter'd in its mien,
Or how the light grew torpid in his eye,
Or how his pearly breath, unpurged there,
Flaw up to join the universal air.

She could not miss the throbbing of his heart,
Whilst her own pulse so wanton'd in its joy ;
She could not guess he stagger'd to a part,
And when he strove no more, the hapless boy !
She read his mortal stillness for content,
Feeling no fear where only love was meant.

Soon she alights upon her o'er-mat,
And straight unyokes her arms from her fair prize ;
Then on his lovely face begins to pore,
As if to glut her soul ;— her hungry eyes
Have grown so jealous of her arms' delight ;
It seems she hath no other sense but sight.

But O sad marvel ! O most bitter strange !
What dismal magic makes his cheek so pale ?
Why will he not embrace,—why not exchange
Her kindly kisses ;—wherefore not exhale
Some odorous message from life's ruby gates.
Where she his first sweet embassy awaits ?

•

Her eyes, poor watchers, fix'd upon his looks,
Are grappled with a wonder near to grief,
As one, who pores on undecipher'd books,
Strains vain sunrise, and dodges with belief ;
So she keeps gazing with a mazy thought,
Framing a thousand doubts that end in nought,

Too stern inscription for a page so young,
The dark translation of his look was death !
But death was written in an alien tongue,
And learning was not by to give it breath ;
So one deep woe sleeps buried in its seal,
Which Time, untimely, hasteth to reveal.

Meanwhile she sits unconscious of her hap,
Nursing Death's marble effigy, which there
With heavy head lies pillow'd in her lap,
And elbows all unhinged ;— his sleeking hair
Creeps o'er her knees, and settles where his hand
Leans with wax fingers crook'd against the sand ;

And there lies spread in many an oozy trail,
Like glossy weeds hung from a chalky base,
That shows no whiter than his brow is pale
So soon the wintry death had bleach'd his face
Into cold marble, - with blue chilly shades,
Showing where in the freezy blood prevades.

And o'er his steadfast cheek a furrow'd pain
Hath set, and stiffen'd, like a storm in ice,
Showing by drooping lines the deadly strain
Of mortal anguish;—yet you might gaze at twice
Ere Death it seem'd, and not his count'enance sleep,
That through those creviced lids did underpeep.

But all that tenders bloom about his eyes
Is Death's own vixens, which he utters late
It is to scatter when the red rest dies,
For blue is chilly, and akin to white.
Also he leaves some tinges on his lips,
Which he hath kiss'd with such cold frosty nips.

“Surely,” quoth she, “he sleeps, the senseless thing,
Oppress'd and faint with toiling in the stream!”
Therefore she will not mar his rest, but sing
So low, her tune shall mingle with his dream;
Meanwhile, her lily fingers tasks to twine
His uncrapt locks uncurling in the brine.

"O lovely boy!"—thus she attuned her voice,—
"Welcome, thrice welcome, to a sea-maid's home,
My love-mate thou shalt be, and true heart's choice :
How have I long d such a twin-self should come,—
A lonely thing, till this sweet chance befel,
My heart kept sighing like a hollow shell.

"Here thou shalt live, beneath this secret dome,
An ocean-bow'r; defended by the shade
Of quiet waters, and of emerald gloom
To lap thee all about. Nay, be not afraid,
Those are but shady fishes that sail by
Like antic clouds across my liquid sky!

"Look how the sunbeam burns upon their scales,
And shows rich glimpses of their Tyrian skins ;
They flash small lightnings from their vigorous tails,
And winking stars are kindled at their fins ;
These shall divert thee in thy weariest mood,
And seek thy hand for gamesomeness and food.

"Lo ! those green pretty leaves with tassel bells,
My flow'rets those, that never pine for drowth ;
Myself did plant them in the dappled shells,
That drink the wave with such a rosy mouth,—
Pearls would'st thou have beside? crystals to shine?
I had such treasures once,—now they are thine.

"Now lay thine ear against this golden sand,
And thou shalt hear the music of the sea,
Those hollow tunes it plays against the land,—
Is't not a rich and wondrous melody?
I have lain hours, and fancied in its tone
I heard the languages of ages gone!

"I too can sing when it shall please thy choice,
And breathe soft tunes through a melodious shell,
Though heretofore I have but set my voice
To some long sighs, grief-harmonized, to tell
How desolate I fared:—but this sweet change
Will add new notes of gladness to my range!

"Or bid me speak, and I will tell thee tales,
Which I have framed out of the noise of waves;
Ere now I have communed with senseless gales,
And held vain colloquies with barren caves;
But I could talk to thee whole days and days,
Only to word my love a thousand ways.

"But if thy lips will bless me with their speech,
Then open, sweet oracles! and I'll be mute;
I was born ignorant for thee to teach,
Nay all love's lore to thy dear looks impute;
Then open thine eyes, fair teachers, by whose light
I saw to give away my heart aright!"

But cold and deaf the sullen creature lies
Over her knees, and with concealing clay,
Like hoarding Avarice, locks up his eyes,
And leaves her world impoverish'd of day ;
Then at his cruel lips she bends to plead,
But there the door is closed against her need.

Surely he sleeps,— so her false wits infer !
Alas ! poor sluggard, never to wake again !
Surely he sleeps, yet without any stir
That might denote a vision in his brain ;
Or if he does not sleep, he feigns to slumber,
Twice she hath teach'd the ending of her song.

Therefore 'tis time she tells him to uncover
Those radiant jesters, and disperse her fears,
Whereby her April face is shaded over,
Like rainy clouds just ripe for showering tears ;
Nay, if he will not wake, so poor she gets,
Herself must rob those lock'd-up cabinets.

With that she stoops above his brow, and bids
Her busy hands forsake his tangled hair
And tenderly lift up those coffer-lids,
That she may gaze upon the jewels there,
Like babes that pluck an early bud apart,
To know the dainty colour of its heart.

Now, picture one, soft creeping to a bed,
Who slowly parts the fringe-hung canopies,
And then starts back to find the sleeper dead ;
So she looks in on his uncover'd eyes,
And seeing all within so drear and dark,
Her own bright soul dies in her like a spark.

Backward she falls, like a pale prophetess,
Under the swoon of holy divination :
And what had all surpass'd her simple guess,
She now resolves in this dark revelation ;
Death's very mystery,—oblivious death :—
Long sleep,—deep night, and an entranc'd breath.

Yet life, though wounded sore, not wholly slain,
Merely obscured, and not extinguish'd, lies ;
Her breath that stood at ebb, now flows again,
Heaving her hollow breast with heavy sighs,
And light comes in and kindles up the gloom,
To light her spirit from its transient tomb.

Then like the sun, awaken'd at new dawn,
With pale bewilder'd face she peers about,
And spies blurr'd images obscurely drawn,
Uncertain shadows in a haze of doubt ;
But her true grief grows shapely by degrees,—
A perish'd creature lying on her knees.

And now she knows how that old Murther preys,
Whose quarry on her lap lies newly slain :
How he roams all abroad and grimly slays,
Like a lean tiger in Love's own domain ;
Parting fond mates,—and oft in flowery lawns
Bereaves mild mothers of their milk y fawns.

O too dear knowledge ! O pernicious carning !
Foul curse engraven upon beauty's page !
Ev'n now the sorrow of that deadly learning
Ploughs up her brow, like an untimely age,
And on her cheek stamps verdict of death's truth
By canker blights upon the bud of youth !

For as unwholesome winds decay the leaf,
So her cheeks' rose is perish'd by her sighs,
And withers in the sickly breath of grief ;
Whilst unacquainted rheum bedims her eyes,
Tears, virgin tears, the first that ever leapt
From those young lids, now plentifully wept.

Whence being shed, the liquid crystalline
Drops straightway down, refusing to partake
In gross admixture with the baser brine,
But shrinks and hardens into pearls opaque,
Hereafter to be worn on arms and ears ;
So one maid's trophy is another's tears !

"O foul Arch-Shadow, thou old cloud of Night,"

(Thus in her frenzy she began to wail,)—

"Thou blank Oblivion—Blotter-out of light,

Life's ruthless murderer, and dear love's bale!

Why hast thou left thy havoc incomplete,

Leaving me here, and slaying the more sweet?

"Lo! what a lovely ruin thou hast made,

Alas! alas! thou hast no eye to see,

And blindly slew'st him in misguided shade.

Would I had lent my doting sense to thee!

But now I turn to thee, a willing mark,

Thine arrows miss me in the aimless dark!

"O doubly cruel!—twice misdoing spite

But I will guide thee with my helping eyes,

Or—walk the wide world through, devoid of sight,—

Yet thou shalt know me by my many signs.

Nay, then thou should'st have spared my rose, false

Death,

And known Love's flow'r by smelling his sweet breath;

"Or, when thy furious rage was round him dealing,

Love should have grown from touching of his skin;

But like cold marble thou art all unfeeling,

And hast no ruddy springs of warmth within,

And being but a shape of freezing bone,

Thy touching only turn'd my love to stone!

"And here, alas! he lies across my knees,
With cheeks still colder than the stilly wave.
The light beneath his eyelids seems to freeze;
Here then, since Love is dead and lacks a grave,
O come and dig it in my sad heart's core—
That wound will bring a balsam for its sore!

"For art thou not a sleep where sense of ill
Lies stingless, like a sense benumb'd with cold,
Healing all hurts only with sleep's good-will!
So shall I slumber, and perchance behold
My living love in dreams,—O happy night,
That lets me company his banish'd spright!

"O poppy Death!—sweet poisoner of sleep,
Where shall I seek for thee, oblivious drug,
That I may steep thee in my drink, and creep
Out of life's coil? Look, look! how I hug
Thy dainty image in this strict embrace,
And kiss this clay-clod model of thy face!

"Put out, put out these sun-consuming lamps,
I do but read my sorrows by their shine;
O come and quench them with thy oozy damps,
And let my darkness intermix with thine;
Since love is blinded, wherefore should I see?
Now love is death,—death will be love to me!

“ Away, away, this vain complaining breath,
It does but stir the troubles that I weep ;
Let it be hush'd and quieted, sweet Death ;
The wind must settle ere the wave can sleep,—
Since love is silent, I would fain be mute ;
O Death, be gracious to my dying suit ! ”

Thus far she pleads, but pleading nought avails her,
For Death, her sullen burthen, deigns no heed ;
Then with dumb craving arms, since darkness fails her,
She prays to Heaven's fair light, as if her need
Inspired her there were Gods to pity pain,
Or end it,—but she lifts her arms in vain !

Poor gilded Grief! the subtle light by this
With mazy gold creeps through her watery mine,
And, diving downward through the green abyss,
Lights up her palace with an amber shine ;
There, falling on her arms,—the crystal skin
Reveals the ruby tide that fares within.

Look how the fulsome beam would hang a glory
On her dark hair, but the dark hairs repel it ;
Look how the perjured glow suborns a story
On her pale lips, but lips refuse to tell it ;
Grief will not swerve from grief, however told
On coral lips, or character'd in gold ;

Or else, thou maid! safe anchor'd on Love's neck,
Listing the hapless doom of young Leander,
Thou would'st not shed a tear for that old wreck,
Sitting secure where no wild surges wander ;
Whereas the woe moves on with tragic pace,
And shows its sad reflection in thy face.

Thus having travell'd on, and track'd the tale,
Like the due course of an old bas-relief,
Where Tragedy pursues her progress pale,
Brood here awhile upon that sea-maid's grief,
And take a deeper imprint from the frieze
Of that young Fate, with Death upon her knees.

Then whilst the melancholy Muse withal
Resumes her music in a sadder tone,
Meanwhile the sunbeam strikes upon the wall,
Conceive that lovely siren to live on,
Ev'n as Hope whisper'd the Promethean light
Would kindle up the dead Leander's spright.

"'Tis light," she says, "that feeds the glittering stars,
And those were stars set in his heavenly brow ;
But this salt cloud, this cold sea-vapour, mars
Their radiant breathing, and obscures them now
Therefore I'll lay him in the cleat blue air,
And see how these dull orbs will kindle there."

Swiftly as dolphins glide, or swifter yet,
With dead Leander in her fond arms' fold,
She cleaves the meshes of that radiant net
The sun hath twined above of liquid gold,
Nor slacks till on the margin of the land
She lays his body on the glowing sand.

There like a pearly waif, just past the reach
Of foamy billows he lies cast. Just then,
Some listless fishers, straying down the beach,
Spy out this wonder. Thence the curious men,
Low crouching, creep into a thicker brake,
And watch her doings till their rude hearts ache.

First she begins to chafe him till she faints,
Then falls upon his mouth with kisses many,
And sometimes pauses in her own complaints
To list his breathing, but there is not any,—
Then looks into his eyes where no light dwells;
Light makes no pictures in such muddy wells.

The hot sun parches his discover'd eyes,
The hot sun beats on his discolour'd limbs,
The sand is oozy whereupon he lies,
Soiling his fairness;—then away she swims,
Meaning to gather him a daintier bed,
Plucking the cool fresh weeds, brown, green and red.

But, simple-witted thief, while she dives under,
Another robs her of her amorous theft;
The ambush'd fishermen creep forth to plunder,
And steal the unwatch'd treasure she has left;
Only his void impression dints the sands;
Leander is purloin'd by stealthy hands!

Lo! how she shudders off the beaded wave,
Like Grief all over tears, and senseless falls,—
His void imprint seems hollow'd for her grave;
Then, rising on her knees, looks round and calls
On "Hero! Hero!" having learn'd this name
Of his last breath, she calls him by the same.

Then with her frantic hands she rends her hairs,
And casts them forth, sad keepsakes to the wind,
As if in plucking those she pluck'd her cares;
But grief lies deeper, and remains behind
Like a barb'd arrow, rankling in her brain,
Turning her very thoughts to throbs of pain.

Anon her tangled locks are left alone,
And down upon the sand she meekly sits,
Hard by the foam, as humble as a stone,
Like an enchanted maid beside her wits,
That ponders with a look serene and tragic,
Stun'd by the mighty mystery of magic.

Or think of Ariadne's utter trance,
Crazed by the flight of that di-loyal traitor,
Who left her gazing on the green expanse
That swallow'd up his track,—yet this would mate her,
Ev'n in the cloudy summit of her woe,
When o'er the far sea-brim she saw him go.

For even so she bows, and bends her gaze
O'er the eternal waste, as if to sun
Its waves by weary thousands all her days,
Dismally doom'd! meanwhile the billows come,
And coldly dabble with her quiet feet,
Like any bleaching stones they wont to greet.

And thence into her lap have boldly sprung,
Washing her weedy tresses to and fro.
That round her crouching knees have darkly hung
But she sits careless of waves, ebb and flow,
Like a lone beacon on a desert coast,
Showing where all her hope was wreck'd and lost.

Yet whether in the sea or vaulted sky,
She knoweth not her love's abrupt resort,
So like a shape of dreams he left her eye,
Winking with doubt. Meanwhile, the churls' report
Has throng'd the beach with many a curious face,
That peeps upon her from its hiding place.

And here a head, and there a brow half seen,
Dodges behind a rock. Here on his hands
A mariner his crumpled cheeks doth lean
Over a rugged crest. Another stands,
Holding his harmful arrow at the head,
Still check'd by human caution and strange dread.

One stops his ears,—another close beholder
Whispers unto the next his grave surmise ;
This crouches down,— and just above his shoulder,
A woman's pity saddens in her eyes,
And prompts her to befriend that lonely grief,
With all sweet helps of sisterly relief.

And down the sunny beach she paces slowly,
With many doubtful pauses by the way ;
Grief hath an influence so hush'd and holy,—
Making her twice attempt, ere she can lay
Her hand upon that sea-maid's shoulder white,
Which makes her startle up in wild affright.

And, like a seal, she leaps into the wave
That drowns the shrill remainder of her scream !
Anon the sea fills up the watery cave,
And seals her exit with a foamy seam,—
Leaving those baffled gazers on the beach,
Turning in uncouth wonder each to each.

Some watch, some call, some see her head emerge,
Wherever a brown weed falls through the foam ;
Some point to white eruptions of the surge :—
But she is vanish'd to her shady home,
Under the deep, inscrutable,—and there
Weeps in a midnight made of her own hair.

Now here, the sighing winds, before unheard,
Forth from their cloudy caves begin to blow
Till all the surface of the deep is stirr'd,
Like to the panting grief it hides below ;
And heaven is cover'd with a stormy rack,
Soiling the waters with its inky black.

The screaming fowl resigns her finny prey,
And labours shoreward with a bending wing,
Rowing again't the wind her toilsome way ;
Meanwhile, the curling billows chase, and fling
Their dewy frost still further on the stones,
That answer to the wind with hollow groans.

And here and there a fisher's far-off bark
Flies with the sun's last glimpse upon its sail,
Like a bright flame amid the waters dark,
Watch'd with the hope and fear of maidens pale ;
And anxious mothers that upturn their brows,
Freighting the gusty wind with frequent vows,

For that the horrid deep has no sure path
To guide Love safe into his homely haven.
And lo! the storm grows blacker in its wrath,
O'er the dark billow brooding like a raven,
That bodes of death and widow's sorrowing,
Under the dusky covert of his wing.

And so day ended. But no vesper spark
Hung forth its heavenly sign; but sheets of flame
Play'd round the savage features of the dark,
Making night horrible. That night, there came
A weeping maiden to high Sestos' steep,
And tore her hair and gazed upon the deep.

And waved aloft her bright and ruddy torch,
Whose flame the boastful wind so rudely fanu'd,
That oft it would recoil, and basely scorch
The tender covert of her sheltering hand;
Which yet, for Love's dear sake, disdain'd retire
And, like a glorying martyr, braved the fire.

For that was Love's own sign and beacon guide
Across the Hellespont's wide weary space,
Wherein he nightly struggled with the tide:--
Look what a red it forges on her face,
As if she blush'd at holding such a light,
Ev'n in the unseen presence of the night!

Whereas her tragic cheek is truly pale,
And colder than the rude and ruffian air
That howls into her ear a horrid tale
Of storm and wreck, and uttermost despair.
Saying, "Leander floats amid the surge,
And those are dismal waves that sing his dirge."

And hark!--a grieving voice, trembling and faint,
Blends with the hollow sobbings of the sea;
Like the sad music of a siren's plaint,
But shriller than Leander's voice should be
Unless the wintry death had changed its tone,—
Wherefore she thinks she hears his spirit moan.

For now, upon each brief and breathless pause,
Made by the raging winds it plainly calls
On "Hero! Hero!"—whereupon she draws
Close to the dizzy brink, that water appals
Her brave and constant spirit to recoil,
However the wild billows toss and toil.

"Oh! dost thou live under the deep deep sea?
I thought such love as thine could never die!
If thou hast gained an immortality
From the kind pitying sea-god, so will I;
And this false cruel tide that used to sever
Our hearts, shall be our common home for ever!"

There we will sit and sport upon one billow,
And sing our ocean ditties all the day,
And lie together on the same green pillow,
That curls above us with its dewy spray!
And ever in one presence live and dwell,
Like two twin pearls within the selfsame shell."

One moment then, upon the dizzy verge
She stands;—with face upturn'd against the sky;
A moment more, upon the foamy surge
She gazes, with a calm despairing eye;
Feeling that awful pause of blood and breath,
Which life endures when it confronts with death;—

Then from the giddy steep she madly springs,
Grasping her maiden robes, that vainly kept
Panting abroad, like unavailing wings,
To save her from her death.—The sea-maid wept
And in a crystal cave her corse enshrined;
No meaner sepulchre should Hero find.

"PLEASE TO RING THE BELLE."

I'll tell you a story that's not in Tom Moore:—
Young Love likes to knock at a pretty girl's door:
So he call'd upon Lucy—'twas just ten o'clock—
Like a spruce single man, with a smart double knock.

Now a handmaid, whatever her fingers be at,
 Will run like a puss when she hears a *rat-tat* :
 So Lucy ran up—and in two seconds more
 Had question'd the stranger and answer'd the door.

The meeting was bliss; but the parting was woe;
 For the moment will come when such comers *must* go.
 So she kiss'd him, and whisper'd—poor innocent thing—
 “The next time you come, love, pray come with a ring.”

 LINES

ON SEEING MY WIFE AND TWO CHILDREN SLEEPING IN THE
 SAME CHAMBER.

And has the earth lost its so spacious round,
 The sky its blue circumference above,
 That in this little chamber there is found
 Both earth and heaven—my universe of love !
 All that my God can give me, or remove,
 Here sleeping, save myself, in mimic death.
 Sweet that in this small compass I behove
 To live their living and to breathe their breath !
 Almost I wish that, with one common sigh,
 We might resign all mundane care and strife,
 And seek together that transcendent sky,
 Where Father, Mother, Children, Husband, Wife,
 Together pant in everlasting life !

A WINTER NOSEGAY.

O, WITHER'D winter Blossoms,
 Dowager-flowers.—the December vanity.
 In antiquated visages and bosoms,—
 What are ye plann'd for,
 Unless to stand for
 Emblems, and peevish morals of humanity?

There is my Quaker Aunt,
 A Paper-Flower,—with a formal border
 No breeze could e'er disorder,
 Pouting at that old bean—the Winter Cherry,
 A pucker'd berry ;
 And Box, like a tough-liv'd annuitant, —
 Verdant alway—
 From quarter-day even to quarter-day ;
 And poor old Honesty, as thin as want,
 Well named—God-wot ;
 Under the baptism of the water-pot.
 The very apparition of a plant ;
 And why,
 Dost hold thy head so high.

Old winter-Daisy ;—
 Because thy virtue never was infirm,
 Howe'er thy stalk be crazy ?
 That never wanton fly, or blighted worm,
 Made holes in thy most perfect indentation ?

450 A WINTER NOSEGAY.

'Tis likely that sour leaf,
To garden thief,
Forcepp'd or wing'd, was never a temptation:—
Well,—still uphold thy wintry reputation;
Still shalt thou frown upon all lovers' trial:
And when, like Grecian maids, young maids of our
Converse with flow'rs,
Then thou shalt be the token of denial.

Away ! dull weeds,
Born without beneficial use or needs !
Fit only to deck our cold winding-sheets:
And then not for the milkmaid's funeral-bloom,
Or fair Fidele's tomb——
To tantalise,—vile cheats !
Some prodigal bee, with hope of after-sweets,
Frigid, and rigid.
As if ye never knew
One drop of dew,

Or the warm sun resplendent ;
Indifferent of culture and of care,
Giving no sweets back to the fostering air,
Churlishly independent—
I hate ye, of all breeds !
Yea, all that live so selfishly—to self,
And not by interchange of kindly deeds—
Hence !—from my shelf !

A LEGEND OF NAVARRE.

'Twas in the reign of Lewis, call'd the Great,
 As one may read on his triumphal arches,
 The thing befel I'm going to relate.

In course of one of those "pomposo" marches
 He lov'd to make, like any gorgeous Persian,
 Partly for war, and partly for diversion.

Some wag had it put in the royal brain
 To drop a visit at an old chateau,
 Quite unexpected, with his courtly train ;
 The monarch lik'd it,—but it happened so,
 That Death had got before them by a post,
 And they were "reckoning without their *host*,"

Who died exactly as a child should die,
 Without a groan or a convulsive breath
 Closing without one pang his quiet eye,
 Sliding composedly from sleep—to death ;
 A corpse so placid ne'er adorn'd a bed,
 He had seem'd not quite—but only rather dead.

All night the widow'd Baroness contriv'd
 To shed a widow's tears ; but on the morrow
 Some news of such unusual sort arriv'd,
 There came strange alteration in her sorrow ;
 From mouth to mouth it pass'd, one common humming
 Throughout the house—the King ! the King is coming.

The Baroness, with all her soul and heart,
A loyal woman, (now called ultra royal,)
Soon thrust all funeral concerns apart,
And only thought about a banquet royal;
In short, by aid of earnest preparation,
The visit quite dismiss'd the visitation.

And, spite of all her grief for the ex-mate,
There was a secret hope she could not smother,
'That some one, early, might replace "the late"—
It was too soon to think about another;
Yet let her minutes of despair be reckon'd
Against her hope, which was but for a *second*.

She almost thought that being thus bereft
Just then, was one of time's propitious touches;
A thread in such a nick so nick'd, it left
Free opportunity to be a duchess;
'Thus all her care was only to look pleasant,
But as for tears—she dropp'd them—for the *present*.

Her household, as good servants ought to try,
Look'd like their lady—anything but sad,
And giggled even that they might not cry,
To damp fine company; in truth they had
No time to mourn, thro' choking turkeys' throats,
Scouring old laces, and reviewing bottles.

Oh what a hubbub for the house of woe !

All, resolute to one irresolution,

Kept tearing, swearing, plunging to and fro,

Just like another French mob revolution.

There lay the corpse that could not stir a muscle,

But all the rest seem'd Chaos in a bustle.

The Monarch came : oh ! who could ever guess

The Baroness had been so late a weeper !

The kingly grace and more than graciousness,

Buried the poor defunct some fathoms deeper.—

Could he have had a prince—alas poor Being !

Seeing would certainly have led to D—ing.

For casting round about her eyes to find

Some one to whom her chattels to endorse,

The comfortable dame at last inclin'd

To choose the cheerful Master of the Horse ;

He was so gay,—so tender,—the complete

Nice man,—the sweetest of the monarch's suite.

He saw at once and enter'd in the lists—

Glance unto glance made amorous replies ;

They talk'd together like two egotists,

In conversation all made up of eyes :

No couple ever got so right consort-ish

Within two hours—a courtship rather shortish.

At last, some sleepy, some by wine opprest,
The courtly company began "nid noddin,"
The King first sought his chamber, and the rest
Instanter followed by the course he trod in.
I shall not please the scandalous by showing
The order, or disorder of their going.

The old Chateau, before that night, had never
Held half so many underneath its roof,
It task'd the Baroness's best endeavour,
And put her best contrivance to the proof,
To give them chambers up and down the stairs,
In twos and threes, by singles, and by pairs.

She had just lodging for the whole—yet barely
And some, that were both broad of back and tall,
Lay on spare beds that served them very sparsely;
However, there were beds enough for all;
But living bodies occurred so many
Could not let the dead one take up any.

The act was, certainly, not over decent:
Some small respect, e'en after death, she ow'd him,
Considering his death had been so recent:
However, by command, her servants stow'd him,
(I am ashamed to think how he was slubber'd,)
Stuck bolt upright within a corner cupboard!

And there he slept as soundly as a post,
With no more pillow than an oaken shelf,
Just like a kind accommodating host,
Taking all inconvenience on himself.
None else slept in that room, except a stranger,
A decent man, a sort of Forest Ranger.

Who, whether he had gone too soon to bed,
Or dreamt himself into an appetite,
Howbeit he took a longing to be fed,
About the hungry middle of the night ;
So getting forth, he sought some scrap to eat,
Hopeful of some stray pasty, or cold meat.

The casual glances of the midnight moon,
Bright'ning some antique ornaments of brass,
Guided his gropings to that corner soon,
Just where it stood, the coffin-safe, alas !
He tried the door—then shook it—and in course
Of time it open'd to a little force.

He put one hand in, and began to grope ;
The place was very deep and quite as dark as
The middle night ;—when lo ! beyond his hope,
He felt a something cold, in fact, the carcase ;
Right overjoy'd, he laugh'd, and blest his luck
At finding, as he thought, this haunch of buck !

Then striding back for his *conteau de chasse*,
Determined on a little midnight lunching,
He came again and prob'd about the mass,
As if to find the fattest bit for munching;
Not meaning wastefully to cut it all up,
But only to abstract a little collop.

But just as he had struck one greedy stroke,
His hand fell down quite powerless and weak;
For when he cut the haunch it plainly spoke
As haunch of ven'son never ought to speak;
No wonder that his hand could go no further—
Whose could?—to carve cold meat that bellow'd,
“murder!”

Down came the Body with a bounce, and down
The Ranger sprang, a staircase at a spring,
And bawl'd enough to waken up a town;
Some thought that *they* were murder'd, some, the King,
And, like Macduff, did nothing for a season,
But stand upon the spot and bellow, “Treason!”

A hundred nightcaps gather'd in a mob,
Torches drew torches, swords brought swords
together,
It seem'd so dark and perilous a job;
The Baroness came trembling like a feather
Just in the rear, as pallid as a corse,
Leaning against the Master of the Horse.

A dozen of the bravest up the stair,
Well lighted and well watch'd, began to clamber;
They sought the door—they found it—they were there,
A dozen heads went poking in the chamber;
And lo! with one hand planted on his hurt,
There stood the body bleeding thro' his shirt, —

No passive corse—but like a duellist
Just smarting from a scratch— in fierce position,
One hand advanced, and ready to resist;
In fact, the Baron don'd the apparition,
Swearing those oaths the French delight in most,
And for the second time “gave up the ghost!”

A living miracle!— for why?—the knife
That cuts so many off from grave gray hairs,
Had only carv'd him kindly into life:
How soon it chang'd the posture of affairs!
The difference one person more or less
Will make in families, is past all guess.

There stood the Baroness—no widow yet
Here stood the Baron—“in the body” still
There stood the Horses' Master in a pet,
Choking with disappointment's bitter pill,
To see the hope of his revivion fail,
Like that of riding on a donkey's tail.

The Baron liv'd—'twas nothing but a trance;
The lady died—'twas nothing but a death;
The cupboard-cut serv'd only to enhance
This postscript to the old Baronial breath:
He soon forgave, for the revival's sake,
A little *chop* intended for a *steak*!

THE POACHER.

A SERIOUS BALLAD

BILL BLOSSOM was a nice young man,
And drove the Bury coach;
But bad companions were his bane,
And egg'd him on to poach.

They taught him how to net the birds,
And how to noose the hare;
And with a wiry terrier,
He often set a snare,

Each "shiny night" the moon was bright,
To park, preserve, and wood
He went, and kept the game alive,
By killing all he could.

Land-owners, who had rabbits, swore
That he had this demerit—
Give him an inch of warren, he
Would take a yard of ferret.

At partridges he was not nice ;
• And many, large and small,
Without Hall's powder, without lead,
Were sent to Leaden-Hall.

He did not fear to take a deer
From forest, park, or lawn ;
And without counting lord or duke,
Used frequently to *fawn*.

Folks who had hares discovered snares—
His course they could not stop :
No harber he, and yet he made
Their hares a perfect crop.

To pheasant he was such a foe,
He tried the keeper's nerves ;
They swore he never seem'd to have
Jam satis of preserves.

The Shooter went to beat, and found
No sporting worth a pin,
Unless he tried the *covers* made
Of silver, plate, or tin.

In Kent the game was little worth,
In Surrey not a button!
The Speaker said he often tried
The *Manors* about *Sutton*.

No county from his tricks was safe;
In each he tried his lucks,
And when the keepers were in *Beds*,
He often was at *Bucks*.

And when he went to *Bucks* alas!
They always came to *Herts*;
And even *Oxon* used to wish
That he had his *dearts*.

But going to his usual *Hants*,
Old *Cheshire* laid his plots;
He got entrapp'd by legal *Berks*,
And lost his life in *Notts*.

BALLAD.

SPRING it is cheery,
Winter is dreary,
Green leaves hang, but the brown must fly;
When he's forsaken,
Wither'd and shaken,
What can an old man do but die?

DEATH'S RAMBLE.

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Love will not clip him,
Maids will not lip him,
Maud and Marian pass him by;
Youth it is sunny,
Age has no honey,—
What can an old man do but die?

June it is jolly,
Oh for its folly!
A dancing leg and a laughing eye;
Youth may be silly,
Wisdom is chilly,—
What can an old man do but die?

DEATH'S RAMBLE.

● ONE day the dreary old King of Death
Inclined for some sport with the carnal,
So he tied a pack of darts on his back,
And quietly stole from his channel.

His head was bald of flesh and of hair,
His body was lean and lank,
His joints at each stir made a crack, and the cur
Took a gnaw, by the way, at his shank.

DEATH'S RAMBLE.

And what did he do with his deadly darts,
This goblin of grisly bone?
He dabbled and spill'd man's blood, and he kill'd
Like a butcher that kills his own.

The first he slaughter'd it made him laugh
(For the man was a coffin-maker)
To think how the mutes, and men in black suits,
Would mourn for an undertaker.

Death saw two Quakers sitting at church:
Quoth he, "We shall not differ."
And he let them alone, like figures of stone,
For he could not make them stiffer.

He saw two duellists going to fight,
In fear they could not smother;
And he shot one through at once--for he knew
They never would shoot each other.

He saw a watchman fast in his box,
And he gave a snore infernal;
Said Death, "He may keep his breath, for his sleep
Can never be more eternal."

He met a coachman driving his coach
So slow, that his fare grew sick;
But he let him stray on his tedious way,
For Death only wars on the *quick*.

Death saw a toll-man taking a toll,
In the spirit of his fraternity ;
But he knew that sort of man would extort,
Though summon'd to all eternity.

He found an author writing his life,
But he let him write no further ;
For Death, who strikes whenever he likes,
Is jealous of all self-murder !

Death saw a patient that pulled out his purse,
And a doctor that took the sum ;
But he let them be —for he knew that the "fee"
Was a prelude to "law" and "fum."

He met a dustman ringing a bell,
And he gave him a mortal thrust ,
For himself, by law, since Adam's flaw,
Is contractor for all our dust.

He saw a sailor mixing his grog,
And he mark'd him out for slaughter :
For on water he scarcely had cared for Death,
And never on rum-and-water.

Death saw two players playing at cards,
But the game wasn't worth a dump,
For he quickly laid them flat with a spade,
To wait for the final trump !

THE PROGRESS OF ART.

O HAPPY time! Art's early days!
When o'er each deed, with sweet self-praise,
Narcissus-like I hung!
When great Rembrandt but little seem'd,
And such Old Masters all were deem'd
As nothing to the young!

Some scratchy strokes—abrupt and few,
So easily and swift I drew.
Suffic'd for my design;
My sketchy, superficial hand
Drew solids at a dash--and spann'd
A surface with a line.

Not long my eye was thus content,
But grew more critical—my be it
Ess. y'd a higher walk;
I copied leaden eyes in lead—
Rheumatic hands in white and red,
And gouty feet—in chalk.

Anon my studious art for days
Kept making faces—happy phrase,
For faces such as mine!
Accomplish'd in the details then,
I left the minor parts of men,
And drew the form divine.

Old Gods and Heroes—Trojan—Greek
Figures—long after the antique,
Great Ajax justly fear'd ;
Hectors, of whom at night I dreamt
And Nestor, fring'd enough to tempt
Bird-nesters to his beard.

•
A Bacchus, leering on a bowl,
A Pallas, that out-star'd her owl,
A Vulcan—very lame ;
A Dian stuck about with stars ;
With my right hand I murder'd Mars—
(One Williams did the same.)

But tir'd of this dry work at last,
Crayon and chalk aside I cast,
And gave my brush a drink !
Dipping—"as when a painter dips
In gloom of earthquake and eclipse,
That is—in Indian ink.

Oh then, what black Mont Blancs arose,
Crested with soot, and not with snows •
What clouds of dingy hue !
In spite of what the bard has penn'd
I fear the distance did not "lend
Enchantment to the view."

Not Radclyffe's brush did e'er design
Black Forests, half so black as mine,
Or lakes so like a pall ;
The Chinese cake dispers'd a ray
Of darkness, like the light of Day
And Martin over all.

Yet urchin pride sustain'd me still,
I gazed on all with right good will,
And spread the drabgy tint ;
" No holy Luke help'd me to paint,
The devil surely, not a Saint,
Had any finger in't !"

But colours came !—like morning light,
With gorgeous hues displacing night,
On Spring's enliven'd scene !
At once the sable shades withdrew ;
My skies got very, very blue ;
My trees extremely green.

And wash'd by my cosmetic brush,
How Beauty's cheeks began to blush ;
With lock of auburn stain—
(Not Goldsmith's Auburn) -- nut-brown hair
That made her loveliest of the fair ;
Not " loveliest of the plain !"

Her lips were of vermillion hue ;
Love in her eyes, and Prussian blue,
Set all my heart in flame !
A young Pygmalion, I ador'd
The maids I made—but time was stor'd
With evil—and it came !

•

Perspective dawn'd—and soon I saw
My houses stand against its law ;
And “ keeping ” all unkept !
My beauties were no longer things
For love and fond imaginings ;
But horrors to be wept !

Ah ! why did knowledge ope my eyes ?
Why did I get more artist-wise ?
It only serves to hint,
What grave defects and wants are mine ;
That I'm no Hilton in design—
In nature no Dewint !

Thrice happy time !—Art's early days !
When o'er each deed, with sweet self-praise,
Narcissus-like I hung !
When great Rembrandt but little seem'd,
And such Old Masters all were deem'd
As nothing to the young !

OUR LADY'S CHAPEL.

A LEGEND OF COBLENZ.

Whoe'er has cross'd the Mosel Bridge,
 And mounted by the fort of Kaiser Franz,
 Has seen, perchance,
 Just on the summit of St. Peter's ridge,
 A little open chapel to the right,
 Wherein the tapers aye are burning bright;
 So popular, indeed, this holy shrine,
 At least among the female population,
 By night, or at high noon, you see it shine,
 A very Missal for *illumination*!

Yet, when you please, at noon or eve, go by
 All other Chapels, standing on the fields,
 Whose mouldy, wife's husbandry but yields
 Beans, peas, potatoes, mangel-wurzel, rye,
 And lo! the Virgin, lonely, dark, and hush,
 Without the glimmer of a tawny rush!

Down on St. Peter's Hill

The lights are burning, burning, burning **still**;
 In fact, it is a pretty retail trade
 To furnish forth the candles ready made;
 And close beside the chapel and the way,
 A chandler, at her stall, sits day by day,
 And sells, both long and short, the waxen tapers
 Smarten'd with tinsel-foil and tinted papers.

To give of the mysterious truth an inkling,
Those who in this bright chapel breathe a prayer
To "Unser Frow," and burn a taper there,
Are said to get a husband "in a twinkling:"
Just as she-glowworms, if it be not scandal,
Catch partners with *their* matrimonial candle.

How kind of blessed saint in heaven—
Where none in marriage, we are told, are given—
To interfere below in making matches,
And help old maidens to cornuted churches!
The truth is, that instead of looking singly
(At least, so whisper wags satirical)
The votaries are all so old and ugly,
No man could fall in love but by a miracle.

However, that such waxen gifts and vows
Are sometimes for the purpose efficacious,
In helping to a spouse,
Is vouch'd for by a story most veracious.

A certain Woman, though in name a wife,
Yet doom'd to lonely life,
Her truant husband having been away
Nine years, two months, a week, and half a day,—
Without remembrances by words or deeds,—
Began to think she had sufficient handle
To talk of widowhood and burn her weeds—
Of course with a wax-candle.

Sick, single-handed with the world to grapple,
 Weary of solitude, and spleen, and vapours,
 Away she hurried to Our Lady's Chapel,
 Full-handed with *two* tapers—
 And pray'd as she had never pray'd before,
 To be a *bona fide* wife once more.
 "Oh Holy Virgin! listen to my prayer!
 And for sweet mercy, and thy son's sake,
 Accept the vows and offering, I make—
 Others set up one light, but here's a *pair*!"

Her prayer, it seem'd, was heard:
 For in three little weeks, exactly reckon'd,
 As blithe as any bird,
 She stood before the Priest with Hans the Second;—
 A fact that made her grateful to hearty,
 To "Uncle Frow," and her peopious Uncle,
 She sent two waxen candles superfine,
 Long enough for a Lapland evening party!

Rich was the Wedding Feast and rare—
 What sausage were there!
 Of sweets and soups there was a perfect glut:
 With plenteous liquors to wash down good cheer
 Brantwein, and Rhum, Kirsch-wasser, and Krug Bier,
 And wine so *sharp* that every one was *cut*.
 Rare was the feast—but rarer was the quality
 Of mirth, of smoky-joke, and song, and toast,—
 When just in all the middle of their jollity,—

With bumpers fill'd to hostess and to host,
 And all the unborn branches of their house,
 Unwelcome and unask'd, like Banquo's Ghost,
 In walk'd the long-lost spouse!

What pen could ever paint!

The hubbub when the Hubs were thus confronted!
 The bridesmaids fitfully began to faint;
 The bridesmen stared—some whistled and some
 grunted:
 Fierce Hans the First look'd like a boar that's hunted;
 Poor Hans the Second like a weakling calf.
 Meanwhile, confounded by the double miracle,
 The two-fold bride sobb'd out, with tears hysterical,
 "Oh Holy Virgin, you're too good—*by Zui!*"

MORAL.

Ye Cöblenz maids, take warning by the rhyme,
 And as our Christian laws forbid polygamy
 For fear of bigamy,
 Only light up *one* taper at a time.

ADDRESS.

Hush! not a sound! no whisper! no denm!
 No restless motion—no intrusive stir!
 But with staid presence and a quiet breath,
 One solemn moment dedicate to Death!

For now no fancied miseries bespeak
 The panting bosom, and the wetted cheek
 No fabled Tempest, or dramatic wreck,
 No Royal Sire wash'd from the mimic deck,
 And dirged by Sea Nymphs to his briny grave!
 Alas! deep, deep beneath the sullen wave,
 His heart, once warm and throbbing as your own,
 Now cold and senseless as the shingle stone:
 His lips, so eloquent, choked up with sand;
 The bright eye ghastly, and the impulsive hand,
 Idly entangled with the ocean weed—
 Full fathom five, a Father he is made!

Yes! where the foaming billows rave the while
 Around the rocky Farns and Holy Isle,
 Deaf to their roar, as to the deaf applause
 That greets descending in the Drama's cause,
 Blind to the honors that applaud the bold,
 To all he hopes for, feared, or loved, of old—
 To love—and love's deep agony, a-cold;
 He, who could move the passions, moved by none,
 Drifts an unconscious corse— Poor ELTON'S race is run!

Weep for the dead!—Yet do not merely ween
 For him who slumbers in the oozy deep:
 Mourn for the dead!—yet not alone for him
 O'er whom the cormorant and gannet swim;
 But, like Grace Darling in her little boat,
 Stretch out a saving hand to those that float—

A DROP OF GIN.

423

The orphan Seven—so prematurely hurl'd
Upon the billows of this stormy world,
And struggling—save your pity take their part—
With breakers huge enough to break the heart!

A DROP OF GIN.

Gin! Gin! a drop of Gin!

What magnifi d monster circle therein!

Ragged, and stained with filth and mud,
Some plague spotted, and some with blood!

Shapes of misery, shame, and sin!

Figures that make us to the and tremble,
Creatures scarce human that more resemble

Broods of diabolical kin,

Ghost and vampyre, demon and Jin!

3

Gin! Gin! a drop of Gin!

The dram of Satan! the liquor of Sin!—

Distilled from the fell

Alembics of hell,

By Guilt and Death,—his own brother and twin!—

That man might fall

Still lower than all

The meanest creatures with scale and fin.

But, hold ;—we are neither Barebones nor Prynne,
Who lashed with such rage
The sins of the age ;
Then, instead of making too much of a din,
Let Anger be mute,
And sweet Mercy dilute,
With a drop of pity, the drop of Gin !

Gin ! Gin ! a drop of Gin !
When, darkly, Adversity's days set in,
And the friends and peers
Of earlier years
Prove warm without, but cold within,
And cannot retrace
A familiar face
That's steeped in poverty up to the chin ;
But snub, neglect, cold-shoulder, and cut
The ragged pauper, misfortune's butt :
Hardly acknowledged by Rich and Kin,
Because, poor reed !
He has no caveat,
A seedy coat, and a hole in that :—
No sole to his shoe, and no brim to his hat ;
Not a change of linen—except his skin ;
No gloves, no vest,
Either second or best ;
And, what is worse than all the rest,
No light heart, though his trousers are thin—

While time elopes
With all golden hopes,
And even with those of pewter and tin;
The brightest dreams,
And the best of schemes,
All knocked down, like a wicket by Mynn.
Each castle in air
Seized by giant Despair,
No prospect in life worth a minnilin pin;
No credit, no cash,
No cold mutton to ha'h,
No bread—not even potatoes to m'h;
No coal in the cellar, no wine in the bin—
Smashed, broken to bits,
With judgments and wits;
Bonds, bills, and cognovits distracting the wits,
In the webs that the spillers of Chancery spin—
Till, weary of life, its worry and strife,
Black visions are rife of a razor, a knife;
Of poison—a rope—“louping over a limb.”

Gin! Gin! a drop of Gin!
Oh! then its tremendous temptations begin,
To take, alas!
To the fatal glass;—
And happy the wretch that does not win
To change the black hue
Of his ruin to “blue”—

426 THE PAUPER'S CHRISTMAS CAROL.

While angels sorrow, and demons grin—
And lose the rheumatic
Chill of his attic
By plunging into the Palace of Gin!

THE PAUPER'S CHRISTMAS CAROL.

FULL of drink and full of meat,
On our SAVIOUR'S natal day,
CHARITY'S perennial treat—
Thus I heard a Pauper say.—
“Ought not I to dance and sing
Thus supplied with famous cheer?
Higbo!
I hardly know—
Christmas comes but once a year.

“After labour's long turmoil,
Sorry fare and frequent fast,
Two-and-fifty weeks of toil,
Pudding-time is come at last!
But are raising high or low,
Flour and suet cheap or dear?
Higbo!
I hardly know—
Christmas comes but once a year.

THE PAUPER'S CHRISTMAS CAROL. 427

"Fed upon the coarsest fare
Three hundred days and sixty-four
But for *one* on viands rare,
Just as if I wasn't poor!
Ought not I to bless my stars,
Warden, clerk, and overseer?"

Heigho!

I hardly know—

Christmas comes but once a year.

"Treated like a welcome guest,
One of Nature's social chieft,
Seated, tuckered on, and pressed—
But when shall I be pressed again?
Twice to pudding, thrice to be f,
A dozen times to ale and beer?"

Heigho!

I hardly know—

Christmas comes but once a year.

"Come to-morrow how it will;
Diet scant and usage rough,
Hunger once has had its fill,
Thirst for once has had enough,
But shall I ever dine again?
Or see another feast appear?"

Heigho!

I only know—

Christmas comes but once a year!

THE LAY OF THE LARK.

“Frozen cares begin to melt,
 Hopes revive and spirits flow—
 Feeling as I have not felt
 Since a dozen months ago—
 Glad enough to sing a song—
 To-morrow shall I volunteer?

Heigho!

I hardly know—

Christmas comes but once a year

“Bright and blessed is the time,
 Sorrows end and joy begin,
 While the bells with merry chime
 Ring the Day of Plenty in!
 But the happy tide to hail,
 With a sigh or with a tear,

Heigho!

I hardly know—

Christmas comes but once a year!”

 THE LAY OF THE LARK.

With dew upon its breast
 And sunshine on its wing,
 The lark arose from its happy nest
 And thus it seemed to sing:—

"Sweet, sweet! from the middle of the wheat
To meet the morning gray,
To leave the corn on a merry morn,
Nor have to curse the day."

* * * * *

With the dew upon their breast,
And the sunlight on their wing,
Towards the skies from the furrows rise
The larks, and thus they sing:—
"If you would know the cause
That makes us sing so gay,
It is because we hail and bless,
And never curse the day.

Sweet, sweet! from the middle of the wheat
(Where lurk our callow brood.)
Where we were hatch'd, and fed
Amidst the corn on a very merry morn,
(We never starve for food.)
We never starve for bread!"

* * * * *

Those flowers so very blue
Those poppies flaming red,

* * * * *

His heavy eye was glazed and dull,
He only murmur'd "bread!"

VAUXHALL.

COME, come, I am very
Disposed to be merry—
So hey! for a wherry
I beckon and bawl!
'Tis dry, not a damp night,
And pleasure will tramp right
To music and lamp light
At shining Vauxhall!

Ay, here's the dark portal—
The check-taking mortal
I pass, and turn short all
At once on the blaze—
Names famous in story,
Lit up *en amour*,
All flaming in glory,
Distracting the gaze!

Oh *my* name lies fallow—
Fame never will hallow
In red light and yellow
Poetical toil—
I've long tried to write up
My name, and take flight up:
But ink will not light up
Like cotton and oil!

But sad thoughts, keep under! —

The painted Rotunder

Invites me. I wonder

Who's singing so clear?

'Tis Sinclair, high-flying,

Scotch ditties supplying;

But some hearts are sighing

For Dignum, I fear!

How bright is the lustre,

How thick the folks muster,

And eagerly cluster,

On bench and in box,—

Whilst Povey is winking

Sweet sounds, or the taking

Kate Stephens is shaking

Her voice and her locks!

What clapping attends her!—

The white doe befriends her—

How Braham attends her

Away by the hand,

For Love to succeed her;

The Signor doth heed her,

And sigheth to lead her

Instead of the band!

Then out we all saiy—

Time's ripe for the Ballet,

Like bees they all rally
Before the machine!—
But I am for tracing
The bright walks and facing
The groups that are pacing
To see and be seen.

How motley they mingle—
What men might one single,
And names that would tingle
Or tickle the ear—
Fresh Chinese contrivers
Of letter,—survivors
Of pawnbroker,—divers
Beau Tibbses appear!

Such little and great men,
And civic and state men—
Collectors and rate-men—
How pleasant to nod
To friends—to note fashions,
To make speculations
On people and passions—
To laugh at the odd!

To sup on true slices
Of ham—with fair prices
For fowl—while cool ices
And liquors abound—

A RECIPE—FOR CIVILISATION. 433

To see Blackmore wander,
A small salamander,
Adown the rope yonder,
And light on the ground!

Oh, the fireworks are splendid;
But darkness is blended—
Bright things are soon ended,
Fade quickly and tall!
There goes the first rocket!—
Some out of pocket,
By stars in the socket,
Lies from Vandyke!

A RECIPE—FOR CIVILISATION.

SURELY, those sages ere who teach
That man is known from brutes by speech,
Which hardly severs man from woman,
But not th' inhuman from the human—
Or else might parrots claim a finity,
And dogs be doctors by Latinity, —
Not t' insist, (as might be shown,) —
That beasts have gibberish of their own,
Which once was no dead tongue, tho' we
Since Esop's days have lost the key;

Not yet to hint dumb men,—and, still, not
 Beasts that could gossip though they **will not**,
 But play at dummy like the monkeys,
 For fear mankind should make them **flunkies**.
 Neither can man be known by feature
 Or form, because so like a creature,
 That some grave men could never shape
 Which is the aped and which the ape,
 Nor by his gait, nor by his height,
 Nor yet because he's black or white,
 But *rational*, -- for so we call
 The only **COOK**. -- As man!
 The only one who brings a bit
 Of dinner to the pot or spoon,
 For where the lion cubs wait hungry,
 To put his venison in a paste
 Dago, by legde, wot you,
 That he who cooks is not a brute,—
 But *Equus brutum est*, who I repeat,
 If a horse had sense he'd boil his beans,
 Nay, no one but a horse would forage
 On naked oats instead of porridge,
 Which proves, if brutes and Scotchmen **vary**,
 The difference is culinary.
 Further, as man is known by feeding
 From brutes, -- so men from men, in **breeding**
 Are still distinguish'd as they eat,
 And raw in manners, raw in meat,—

Look at the polish'd nations, hight
The civilized—the most polite
Is that which bears the praise of nations
For dressing eggs two hundred fashions,
Whereas, at savage feeders look,—
The less refined the less they cook;
From Tartar grooms that metely straddle
Across a steak and warm their saddle,
Down to the Mysian squaw,
That bolts her chop and chops raw,
And, like a wild beast, cares as little
To dress her person as her vitals—
For gowns, and gloves, and caps, and tippets,
Are beauty's sauces, spice, and appetts,
And not by chamber-hoards put on,
But those who roast and boil their mutton:
So Eve and Adam were no drosses
Because they lived on water-cresses,
And till they learn'd to cook their crudités,
Went blind as beetles to their nudities.
For niceness comes from th' inner side,
(As an ox is drest before his hide,)
And when the entrail loathes vulgarity
The outward man will soon cull rarity,
For 'tis th' effect of what we eat
To make a man look like his meat,
As insects show their food's complexions;
Thus fopling clothes are like confections.

But who, to feed a jaunty coxcomb,
Would have an Abyssinian ox come?
Or serve a dish of fricassees,
To clodpoles in a coat of frieze?
Whereas a black would call for buffalo
Alive--and, no doubt, eat the offal too.
Now, (this premised) it follows then
That certain culinary men
Should first go forth with pans and spits
To bring the heathens to their wits,
(For all wise Scotchmen of our century
Know that first steps are alimentary;
And, as we have proved, then pots and saucepans
Must pave the way for Wilberforce plans);
But Bunyan en'd to rick the near gate
To take man's town, was battering his gate,
When reason should have work'd her course
As men of war do--when their force
Can't take a town by open courage,
They steal an entry with its forage.
What reverend bishop, for example,
Could preach honest Aps from his temple?
Whereas a cook would soon unseat him,
And make his own churchwardens eat him.
Not Irving could convert those vermin
Th' Anthropophages, by a sermon;
Whereas your Osborne, in a trice,
Would "take a shin of beef and spice,"--

And raise them such a savoury smother,
No negro would devour his brother,
But turn his stomach round as loth
As Persians, to the old 'black' broth,—
For knowledge oitenest makes an entry,
As well as true love, thro' the pantry,
Where beaux that come at first for feeding
Grow gallant men and get good breeding.—
Exempli gratiâ—in the West.
Ship-traders say there grows a nest
Lined with black natives, like a rookery,
But coarse & common crows at cookery.—
This race, though now call'd O. Y. E. men,
(To show they are more than A. B. C. men.)
Was once so ignorant of our knacks,
They laid their mats upon their backs
And grew their quatern loaves for luncheon
On trees that baked them in the sunshine.
As for their bodices, they were coated,
(For painted things are so denoted ;)
But—the naked truth is—stark primevals,
That said their prayers to timber devils,
Allow'd polygamy—dwelt in wigwags—
And, when they meant a feast, ate big yams.—
And why?—because their savage nook
Had ne'er been visited by Cook,—
And so they fared till our great chief,
Brought them, not Methodists, but beef

In tubs,—and taught them how to live,
Knowing it was too soon to give,
Just then, a homily on their sins,
(For cooking ends ere grace begins,)
Or hand his tracts to the untractable
Till they could keep a more exact table—
For nature has her proper courses,
And wild men must be back'd like horses,
Which jockeys know, are never fit
For riding till they've had a bit
Of the mouth; but then, with proper tackle,
You may trot them to a table-cloth,
Ergo (I say) he first made changes
In the heathen modes, by kitchen ranges,
And taught the king's cook, by convincing
Process, that chewing was not mewing,
And in her black belt thrust a handle
Of tracts abridged from Chase and Randall,
Where, ere she had reach'd beyond Welsh rabbits,
She saw the spateness of her habits,
And round her joins put on a striped
Towel, where fingers might be wiped,
And then her breast clothed like her ribs,
(For aprons lead of course to bibs,)
And by the time she had got a meat-
Screen, veil'd her back, too, from the heat—
As for her gravies and her sauces,
(Tho' they reform'd the royal lauces,)

Her forcemeats and ragouts,—I praise not,
Because the legend further says not,
Except, she kept each Christian high-day,
And once upon a fat good Fry-day
Ran short of logs, and told the Pagan,
That turn'd the spit, to chop up Dagon!—

SPRING.

A NEW VERSION.

“HAM. The air bite shrewdly—it is very cold.
HOR. It is a nipping and an eager air.”—*Hamlet*.

“COME, gentle Spring! ethereal *mildness* come!”
Oh! Thomson, void of rhyme as well as reason,
How couldst thou thus poor human nature hum?
There's no such season.

The Spring! I shrink and shudder at her name!
For why, I find her breath a bitter blighter!
And suffer from her *blows* as if they came
From Spring the Fighter.

Her praises, then, let hardy poets sing,
And be her tuneful laureates and upholders,
Who do not feel as if they had a *Spring*
Pour'd down their shoulders!

Let others eulogise her floral shows,
From me they cannot win a single stanza,
I know her blooms are in full blow—and so 's
The Influenza.

Her cowslips, stocks, and lilies of the vale,
Her honey-blossoms that you hear the bees at,
Her pansies, daffodils, and primrose pale,
Are things I sneeze at!

Fair is the vernal quarter of the year!
And fair its early buddings and its blowings—
But just suppose Consumption's seeds appear
With other sowings!

For me, I find, when eastern winds are high,
A frigid, not a genial inspiration;
Nor can, like Iron-Crested Chubb, defy
An inflammation.

Smitten by breezes from the land of plague,
To me all vernal luxuries are fables,
Oh! where's the *Spring* in a rheumatic leg,
Stiff as a table's?

I limp in agony, — I wheeze and cough;
And quake with Ague, that Great Agitator
Nor dream, before July, of leaving off
My Respirator.

What wonder if in May itself I lack
A peg for laudatory verse to hang on?—
Spring mild and gentle!—yes, as Spring-heeled Jack
To those he sprang on.

In short, whatever panegyrics lie
In fulsome odes too many to be cited,
The tenderness of Spring is all my eye,
And that is blighted!

THE VOLUNTEER.

'Twas in that memorable year
France threaten'd to put off in
Flat-bottom'd boats intending each
To be a British coffin,
To make sad widows of our wives,
And every babe an orphan—

When coats were made of scarlet cloaks,
And heads were dredg'd with flour,
I 'listed in the Lawyers' Corps,
Against the battle hour;
A perfect Volunteer—for why?
I brought my "will and pow'r."

THE VOLUNTEER.

One dreary day—a day of dread,
Like Cato's, over-cast—
About the hour of six, (the morn
And I were breaking fast,)
There came a loud and sudden sound,
That struck me all aghast!

A dismal sort of morning roll,
That was not to be eaten:
Although it was no skin of mine,
But parchment, that was beaten,
I felt tattoo'd through all my flesh,
Like any Otaheitean.

My jaws with utter dread enclosed
The morsel I was munching,
And terror lock'd them up so tight,
My very teeth went crunching
All through my bread and tongue at once,
Like sandwich made at luncheon.

My hand that held the tea-pot fast,
Stiffen'd, but yet unsteady,
Kept pouring, pouring, pouring o'er
The cup in one long eddy,
'Till both my hose were mark'd with *tea*,
As they were mark'd already. *

I felt my visage turn from red
To white—from cold to hot;
But it was nothing wonderful
My colour changed, I wot,
For, like some variable silks,
I felt that I was shot.

•

And looking forth with anxious eye,
From my snug upper story
I saw our melancholy corps,
Going to beds all gay;
The pioneers seem'd very loth
To axe their way to glory.

The captain march'd as mourners march,
The ensign too seem'd lagging,
And many more although they were
No ensigns took to flagging—
Like corpses in the Serpentine,
Methought they wanted dragging.

But while I watch'd, the thought of death
Came like a chilly gust,
And lo! I shut the window down,
With very little lust
To join so many marching men,
That soon might be March dust.

Quoth I, "Since Fate ordains it so,
Our foe the coast must land on;"—
I felt so warm beside the fire
I cared not to abandon;
Our hearths and homes are always things
That patriots make a stand on.

"The fools that fight abroad for home,"
Thought I, "may get a wrong one;
Let those that have no homes at all,
Go battle for a long one."
The mirror here confirmed me this
Reflection, by a strong one.

For there where I was won't to shave,
And deck me like Adonis,
There stood the leader of our foes,
With vultures for his cronies—
No Corsican but Death himself,
The Bony of all Bonies.

A horrid sight it was, and sad
To see the grisly chap
Put on my crimson livery,
And then begin to clap
My helmet on—ah me! it felt
Like any felon's cap.

My plume seem'd borrow'd from a hearse,
An undertaker's crest ;
My epaulettes like coffin-plates ;
My belt so heavy press'd,
Four pipeclay cross-roads seem'd to lie
At once upon my breast.

•
My brazen breast-plate only lack'd
A little heap of salt,
To make me like a corpse full dress'd,
Preparing for the vault —
To set up what the Post calls
My everlasting balt.

This funeral show inclined me quite
To peace ; — and here I am !
Whilst better lions go to war,
Enjoying with the lamb
A lengthened life, that might have been
A Martial Epigram.

MORNING MEDITATIONS.

Let Taylor preach upon a morning breezy,
How well to rise while nights and larks are flying—
For my part getting up seems not so easy
By half as *lying* .

What if the lark does carol in the sky,
Soaring beyond the sight to find him out—
Wherefore am I to rise at such a fly?
I'm not a trout.

Talk not to me of bees and such like hums,
The smell of sweet herbs at the morning prime—
Only lie long enough, and bed becomes
A bed of *time*.

To me Dan Phœbus and his car are nought,
His steeds that paw impatiently about,—
Let them enjoy, say I, a horse's ought,
The first turn-out!

Right beautiful the dewy meads appear
Besprinkled by the rosy-finger'd girl:
What then,—if I prefer my pillow beer
To early pearl?

My stomach is not ruled by other men's,
And grumbling for a reason, quaintly begs
“Wherefore should master rise before the hens
Have laid their eggs?”

Why from a comfortable pillow start
To see faint flushes in the east awaken?
A fig, say I, for any streaky part,
Excepting bacon.

An early riser Mr. Gray has drawn,
Who used to haste the dewy grass among,
"To meet the sun upon the upland lawn"—
Well—he died young.

With charwomen such early hours agree,
And sweeps, that earn betimes their bit and sup;
But I'm no climbing boy, and need not be
"All up—all up!"

So here I'll lie, my morning calls deferring,
'Till something nearer to the stroke of noon;—
A man that's fond precociously of *stirring*,
Must be a speon.

LOVE LANE.

If I should love a maiden more,
And woo her ev'ry hope to crown,
I'd love her all the country o'er,
But not declare it out of town.

One even, by a mossy bank,
That held a hornet's nest within,
To Ellen on my knees I sank,—
How snakes will twine around the shin!

A bashful fear my soul unnerved,
And gave my heart a backward tug;
Not was I cheer'd when she observed,
Whilst I was silent,—“What a slug!”

At length my offer I preferr'd
And Hope a kind reply forbode—
Alas! the only sound I heard
Was, “What a horrid ugly toad!”

I vow'd to give her all my heart,
To love her till my life took leave,
And painted all a lover's smart—
Except a wasp gone up his sleeve!

But when I ventured to abide
Her father's and her mother's grants—
Sudden, she started up, and cried,
“O dear! I am all over ants!”

Nay, when beginning to beseech
The cause that led to my rebuff,
The answer was as strange a speech,
“A Daddy-Longlegs sure enough!”

I spoke of fortune—house,—and lands,
And still renew'd the warm attack,—
’Tis vain to offer ladies hands
That have a spider on the back!

'Tis vain to talk of hopes and fears,
And hope the least reply to win,
From any maid that stops her ears
In dread of earwigs creeping in !

'Tis vain to call the dearest names
Whilst stoats and weazels startle by—
As vain to talk of mutual flames,
To one with glow-worms in her eye !

What check'd me in my fond address,
And knock'd each pretty image down ?
What stopp'd my Ellen's faltering Ycs ?
A caterpillar on her gown !

To list to Philomel is sweet—
To see the Moon rise silver-pale,—
But not to kneel at Lady's feet
And crush a rival in a snail !

Sweet is the eventide, and kind
Its zephyr, balmy as the south ;
But sweeter still to speak your mind
Without a chafer in your mouth !

At last, embolden'd by my bliss,
Still fickle Fortune play'd me foul,
For when I strove to snatch a kiss
She scream'd—by proxy, through an owl !

Then, Lovers, doom'd to life or death,
 Shun moonlight, twilight, lanes, and bats,
 Lest you should have in selfsame breath
 To bless your fate—and curse the gnats!

 THE DESERT-BORN.

"Fly to the desert, fly with me."—LADY HESTER STANHOPE.

'Twas in the wil ds of Lebanon, amongst its barren hills,—
 To think upon it, even now, my vety blood it chills!—
 My sketch-book spread before me, and my pencil in my
 hand,

I gazed upon the mountain range, the red tumultuous
 sand,

The plummy palms, the sombre firs, the cedars tall and
 proud.—

When lo! a shadow pas'd across the paper like a
 cloud,

And looking up I saw a form, apt figure for the scene,—
 Methought I stood in presence of some oriental queen!

The turban on her head was white as any driven snow;
 A purple bandalette past o'er the lofty brow below,
 And thence upon her shoulders fell, by either jewell'd
 ear;

In yellow folds voluminous she wore her long cachemere;

Whilst underneath, with ample sleeves, a Turkish robe
of silk

Enveloped her in drapery the colour of new milk ;

Yet oft it floated wide in front, disclosing underneath

A gorgeous Persian tunic, rich with many a broider'd
wreath,

Compell'd by clasps of costly pearl around her neck to
meet—

And yellow as the amber were the buskins on her feet!

Of course I bow'd my lowest bow—of all the things on
earth,

The reverence due to loveliness, to rank, or ancient
birth,

To power, to wealth, to genius, or to anything un-
common,

A man should bend the lowest in a *Desert* to a
Woman!

Yet some strange influence stronger still, though vague
and undefined,

Compell'd me, and with magic might subdued my soul
and mind ;

There was a something in her air that drew the spirit
nigh,

Beyond the common witchery that dwells in woman's
eye!

With reverence deep, like any slave of that peculiar
land,

I bow'd my forehead to the earth, and kiss'd the arid
sand;

And then I touch'd her garment's hem, devoutly as a
Dervise,

Predestinated (so I felt) for ever to her service.

Nor was I wrong in auguring thus my fortune from her
face,

She knew me, seemingly, as well as any of her race;

"Welcome!" she cried, as I uprose submissive to my feet;

"It was ordain'd that you and I should in this desert
meet!

Ay, ages since, before thy soul had burst its prison bars,
This interview was promised in the language of the
stars!"

Then clapping, as the Easterns' wont, her all-command-
ing hands,

A score of mounted Arabs came fast spurring o'er the
sands,

Nor rein'd they up their foaming steeds till in my very
face

They blew the breath impetuous, and panting from the
race.

"Fear naught," exclaim'd the radiant one, as I sprang
off aloof,

"Thy precious frame need never fear a blow from
horse's hoof!

Thy natal star was fortunate as any orb of birth,
And fate hath held in store for thee the rarest gift of
earth."

Then turning to the dusky men, that humbly waited
near,

She cried, "Go bring the BEAUTIFUL—for lo! the MAN
is here!"

Off went th' obsequious train as swift as Ar
could flee,

But Fancy fond out-raced them all, with bridle loose
and free,

And brought me back, for love's attack, some fair
Circassian bride,

Or Georgian girl, the Harem's boast, and fit for sultan's
side;

Methought I lifted up her veil, and saw dark eyes
beneath,

Mild as gazelle's, a snowy brow, ripe lips, and pearly
teeth,

A swan-like neck, a shoulder round, full bosom and a
waist

Not too compact, and rounded limbs, to oriental taste.

Methought—but here, alas! alas! the airy dream to
blight,

Behold the Arabs leading up a mare of milky white!

To tell the truth, without reserve, evasion, or remorse,

The last of creatures in my love or liking is a horse:

Whether in early youth some kick untimely laid me flat !
Whether from horn antipathy, as some dislike a cat,
I never yet could bear the kind, from Meux's giant
steeds

Down to those little bearish cubs of Shetland's shaggy
breeds ;—

As for a war-horse, he that can bestride one *is* a hero,
Merely to look at such a sight my courage sinks to zero.
With lightning eyes, and thunder mane, and hurricanes
of legs,

Tempestuous tail—to picture him description vainly begs !
His fiery nostrils send forth clouds of smoke instead of
breath—

Nay, was it not a Horse that bore the grisly Shape of
Death ?

Judge then how cold an ague-fit of agony was mine
To see the mistress of my fate, imperious, make a sign
To which my own foreboding soul the cruel sense sup-
plied :

"Mount, happy man, and *run away* with your Arabian
bride !"

Grim was the smile, and tremulous the voice with
which I spoke,

Like any one's when jesting with a subject not a joke,
So men have trifled with the axe before the fatal stroke.

"Lady, if mine had been the luck in Yorkshire to be born,
Or any of its *Ridings*, this would be a blessed morn :

But, hapless one! I cannot ride—there's something in a horse

That I can always honour, but I never could endorse.

To speak still more commercially, in riding I am quite

Averse to running long, and apt to be paid off at sight:

In legal phrase, for every class to understand me still,

I never was in stirrups yet a tenant but at will;

Or, if you please, in artist terms, I never went a-straddle

On any horse without 'a want of keeping' in the saddle.

In short," and here I blush'd, abash'd, and held my head
full low,

"I'm one of those whose infant years have heard the
chimes of Bow!"

The lady smiled, as houris smile, adown from Turkish
skie

And beams of cruel kindness shone within her hazel eyes;

"Stranger," she said, "or rather say, my nearest dearest
friend,

There's something in your eyes, your air, and that high
instep's bend,

That tells me you're of Arab race,—whatever spot of
earth,

Cheapside, or Bow, or Stepney, had the honour of your
birth,

The East is is your country! Like an infant changed
at nurse

By fairies, you have undergone a nurtureship perverse;

But this—these desert sands—these palms, and cedars
waving wild,

All, all, adopt thee as their own—an oriental child—

The cloud may hide the sun awhile—but soon or late,
no doubt,

The spirit of your ancestry will burst and sparkle out!

I read the starry characters—and lo! 'tis written there,

Thou wert foredoom'd of sons of men to ride upon this
Mare,

A Mare till now was never back'd by one of mortal
mould,

Hark, how she neighs, as if for thee she knew that she
was foal'd!"

And truly—I devoutly wish'd a blast of the Simoom

Had stifled her!—the Mare herself appear'd to mock
my doom;

With many a bound she caper'd round and round me
like a dance,

I fear'd indeed some wild caress would end the fearful
prance,

And felt myself, and saw myself—the phantasy was
horrid!—

Like old Redgauntlet, with a shoe imprinted on my
forehead!

On bended knees, with bowing head, and hands up-
raised in prayer,

I begg'd the turban'd Sultanness the issue to forbear;

I painted weeping orphan babes around a widow'd wife,
And drew my death as vividly as others do from life.

"Behold," I said, "a simple man, for such high feats
unfit,

Who never yet has learn'd to know the crupper from
the bit,

Whereas the boldest horsemanship, and first equestrian
skill,

Would well be task'd to bend so wild a creature to the
will."

Alas! alas! 'twas all in vain, to supplicate and kneel,

The quadruped could not have been more cold to my
appeal!

"Fear nothing," said the smiling Fate, "when human
help is vain,

Spirits shall by thy stirrups fly, and fairies guide the
rein;

Just glance at yonder animal, her perfect shape remark,

And in thy breast at once shall glow the oriental spark!

As for thy spouse and tender babes, no Arab roams the
wild

But for a Mare of such descent would barter wife and
child."

"Nay then," cried I—(heaven shrive the lie!) "to tell
the secret truth,

'Twas my unhappy fortune once to over-ride a youth!

A playful child,—so full of life!—a little fair-haired boy,
His sister's pet, his father's hope, his mother's darling
joy!

Ah me! the frantic shriek she gave! I hear it ringing
now!

That hour upon the bloody spot, I made a holy vow;
A solemn compact, deeply sworn, to witness my re-
morse,

That never more these limbs of mine should mount on
living horse!"

Good heaven! to see the angry glance that flash'd upon
me now!

A chill ran all my marrow through—the drops were on
my brow!

I knew my doom, and stole a glance at that accursed
Mare,

And there she stood, with nostrils wide, that snuff'd
the sultry air.

How lion like she lash'd her flanks with her abundant
tail;

While on her neck the stormy mane kept tossing to the
gale!

How fearfully she roll'd her eyes between the earth and
sky,

As if in wild uncertainty to gallop or to fly!

While with her hoof she scoop'd the sand as if before she
gave

My plunge into eternity she meant to dig my grave!

And I, that ne'er could calmly bear a horse's ears at
play,

Or hear without a yard of jump his shrill and sudden
neigh—

Whose foot within a stable door had never stood an
inch—

Whose hand to pat a living steed would feel an awful
flinch—

I that had never thrown a leg across a pony small
To scour the pathless desert in the tall
For oh! it is no flight to every look I cast
Her restless legs seem twice as long as when I saw
them first!

In agony I shrank—and yet still unconquered by
fears

My blood was boiling fast to Juliet's eyes in my
ears,

I gasped as if in vacuo and the lightning would spare
Some secret Demon seemed to pass his fingers through
my hair.

I could not stir—I could not speak—I could not even
see—

A sudden mist rose up between that awful Mare and
me,—

I tried to pray, but found no words—tho ready ripe to
weep,

No tear would flow,—o'er every sense a swoon began to
creep,—

When lo! to bring my horrid fate at once unto the
brunt,

Two Arabs seized me from behind, two others in the
front,

And ere a muscle could be strung to try the strife
forlorn,

I found myself, Mazeppa-like, upon the Desert-Born!

Terrific was the neigh she gave, the moment that my
weight

Was felt upon her back, as if exulting in her freight;

Whilst dolefully I heard a voice that set each nerve ajar—

“Off with the bridle—quick!—and leave his guidance
to his star!”

“Allah! il Allah!” rose the shout—and starting with
a bound,

The dreadful Creature clear'd at once a dozen yards of
ground;

And grasping at her mane with both my cold convulsing
hands,

Away we flew—away! away! across the shifting sands!

My eyes were closed in utter dread of such a fearful race,

But yet by certain signs I knew we went no earthly pace,

For turn whichever way we might, the wind with equal
force

Rush'd like a torrid hurricane still adverse to our
course—

One moment close at hand I heard the roaring Syrian
Sea,

The next it only murmur'd like the humming of a bee !
And when I dared at last to glance across the wild
immense,

Oh, ne'er shall I forget the whirl that met the dizzy
sense !

What seem'd a little sprig of fern, ere lips could reckon
twain,

A palm of forty cubits high we planted it on the plain ;
What tongue could tell — what pencil paint — what pen
describe the sight ?

Now off — now on — now up — now down — and flung
from side to side !

I tried to speak, but had no voice to counter her with its
tone —

My scanty breath was jolted out with many a sudden
groan —

My joints were rack'd — my back was bent un'd, so firmly
I had clung —

My nostrils gush'd, and thrice my teeth had bitten
through my tongue —

When lo ! — farewell all hope of life ! — she turn'd and
faced the rocks,

None but a flying horse could clear those monstrous
granite blocks !

So thought I, but I little knew the desert pride and fire,
Derived from a most deer-like dam, and lion-hearted
sire ;

Little I guess'd the energy of muscle, blood, and bone,
Bound after bound with eager spurges, she clear'd each
massive stone, —

Nine mortal leaps were pass'd before a huge grey rock
at length

Stood planted there as if to date her utmost pitch of
strength—

My time will come! that grudge to heap my monument
of death!

She gave the signal and drew a fuller
breath

Nine strides and the hour of death warn'd me of
the spurge

If it her mission be to be able on the win —

But all the rest of the world black the million
spark aroun

Her high mission fulfilled tucked the crest of that pro-
digy us in

Will she black the world in the sun—or else 'twas
demon-mish

One second moment and Marud Maru roll'd breathless^o
on the earth!

* * * * *

How long it was I cannot tell ere I revived to senses,
And then but to endure the pangs of agony intense,

For over an lay powerless and still as any stone,

• The Core that erst had so much fire, strength, spirit, of
its own

My heart was still—my pulses stopp'd—midway 'twixt
life and death,

With pain unspeakable I fetch'd the fragment of a
breath,

Not vital air enough to frame one short and feeble sigh,
Yet even that I loath'd because it would not let me die.
Oh slowly, slowly, lowly on from starry night till
morn,

Time flapp'd along with leaden wing across that
waste firkn!

I curs'd the hour that brought me first wit' in this
world of

A sore and heavy to see the gift of life—

But who hath it but what I feel in labouring
breast?

Why any who has had like me the NIGHTMARE
on his heart

THE BACHELOR'S DREAM

My pipe is lit my dog is mix'd,
My curtains drawn and all is snug,
Old Puss is in her elbow chair,
And Tidy is sitting on the rug
Last night I had a curious dream,
Miss Susan Bates was Mistress Mogg—
What d'ye think of that my Cat?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog?

She look'd so fair, she sang so well,
I could but woo and she was won,
Myself in blue, the bride in white,
The ring was placed, the deed was done!
Away we went in chaise-and-four,
As fast as grinning boys could flog—
What d'ye think of that, my Cat?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog?

What loving tête-à-têtes to come!
But tête-à-têtes must still defer!
When Susan came to live with *me*,
Her mother came to live with *her*!
With sister Belle she couldn't part,
But all *my* ties had leave to jog—
What d'ye think of that, my Cat?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog?

The mother brought a pretty Poll—
A monkey, too, what work he made?
The sister introduced a Beau—
My Susan brought a favourite maid—
She had a tabby of her own,—
A snappish mongrel christen'd Gog—
What d'ye think of that, my Cat?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog?

The Monkey bit—the Parrot scream'd,
All day the sister strumm'd and sung ;
The petted maid was such a scold !
My Susan learn'd to use her tongue :
Her mother had such wretched health,
She sate and croak'd like any frog—
What d'ye think of that, my Cat ?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog ?

No longer "Deary," "Duck," and "Love,"
I soon came down to simple "MI!"
The very servants cross'd my wish,
My Susan let me down to them.
The poker hardly seem'd my own,
I might as well have been a log—
What d'ye think of that, my Cat ?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog ?

My clothes they were the queerest shape !
Such coats and hats she never met !
My ways they were the oddest ways !
My friends were such a vulgar set !
Poor Tomkinson was snubb'd and huff'd—
She could not bear that Mister Blogg—
What d'ye think of that, my Cat ?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog !

At times we had a spar, and then
Mamma must mingle in the song—
The sister took a sister's part—
The Maid declared her Master wrong—
The Parrot learn'd to call me "Fool!"
My life was like a London fog—
What d'ye think of that, my Cat?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog?

My Susan's taste was superfine,
As proved by bills that had no end—
I never had a decent coat—
I never had a coin to spend!
She forced me to resign my Club,
Lay down my pipe, retrench my grog—
What d'ye think of that, my Cat?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog?

Each Sunday night we gave a rout
To fops and flirts, a pretty list;
And when I tried to steal away,
I found my study full of whist!
Then, first to come and last to go,
There always was a Captain Hogg—
What d'ye think of that, my Cat?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog?

THE KNIGHT AND THE DRAGON. 487

Now was not that an awful dream
For one who single is and snug—
With Pussy in the elbow-chair
And Tray reposing on the rug?—
If I must totter down the hill,
'Tis safest done without a clog—
What d'ye think of that, my Cat?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog?

THE KNIGHT AND THE DRAGON.

In the famous old times,
(Famed for chivalrous crimes)
As the legends of Rhineland deliver,
Once there flourished a Knight,
Who Sir Otto was hight,
On the banks of the rapid green river!

On the Drachenfels' crest
He had built a stone nest,
From which he pounced down like a vulture,
And with talons of steel
Out of every man's meal
Took a very extortionate multure.

Yet he lived in good fame,
With a nobleman's name,
As "Your High-and-well-born" address'd daily—
Though Judge Park in his wig
Would have deemed him a prig,
Or a cracksman, if tried at th' Old Bailey.

It is strange—very strange!
How opinions will change!—
How antiquity blazons and hallows
Both the man, and the crime,
That a less lapse of time
Would commend to the hulks or the gallows!

Thus enthrall'd by Romance,
In a mystified trance,
E'en a young, mild, and merciful woman
Will reel with delight
The wild keep, and its Knight,
Who was quite as much tiger as human!

Now it chanced on a day,
In the sweet month of May,
From his casement Sir Otto was gazing,
With his sword in the sheath,
At that prospect beneath,
Which our tourists declare so amazing!

THE KNIGHT AND THE DRAGON. 469

Yet—he gazed on the Rhine,
And its banks, so divine;
Yet with no admiration or wonder,
But the *gout* of a thief,
As a more modern chief
Looked on London, and cried “What a plunder!”

From that river so fast,
From that champaign so vast,
He collected rare tribute and presents;
Water-rates from ships’ loads,
Highway-rates on the roads,
And hard poor-rates from all the poor peasants!

When behold! round the base
Of his strong dwelling-place,
Only gained by most toil-some progression,
He perceived a full score
Of the rustics, or more,
Winding up in a sort of procession!

“Keep them out!” the Knight cried,
To the warders outside—
But the hound at his feet gave a grumble!
And in scrambled the knaves,
Like feudality’s slaves,
With all forms that are servile and humble.

470 THE KNIGHT AND THE DRAGON

"Now for boorish complaints!
Grant me patience, ye Saints!"
Cried the Knight, turning red as a mullet;
When the baldest old man
Thus his story began,
With a guttural croak in his gullet!

"Lord supreme of our lives,
Of our daughters, our wives,
Our she-cousins, our sons, and their spouses,
Of our sisters and aunts,
Of the babies God grants
Of the handmaids that dwell in our houses!

"Mighty master of all
We possess, great or small,
Of our cattle, our sows, and their farrows;
Of our mares and their colts,
Of our crows, and our holts,
Of our ploughs, of our wains, and our harrows!

"Noble Lord of the soil,
Of its corn and its oil,
Of its wine, only fit for such gentles!
Of our cream and sour-kraut,
Of our carp and our trout,
Our black bread, and black puddings, and lentils!

THE KNIGHT AND THE DRAGON. 471

"Sovran Lord of our cheese,
And whatever you please—
Of our bacon, our eggs, and our butter,
Of our backs and our polls,
Of our bodies and souls—
O give ear to the woes that we utter!

"We are truly perplex'd,
We are frightened and vex'd,
'Till the strings of our hearts are all twisted;
We are ruined and curst
By the fiercest and worst
Of all robbers that ever existed!"

"Now by Heav'n and this light!"
In a rage cried the Knight,
"For this speech all your bodies shall stiffen!
What! by Peasants miscall'd!"
Quoth the man that was bald,
"Not your Honour we mean, but a Griffin.

"For our herds and our flocks
He lays wait in the rocks,
And jumps forth without giving us warning:
Two poor wethers, right fat,
And four lambs after that,
Did he swallow this very May morning!"

473 THE KNIGHT AND THE DRAGON

Then the High-and-well-born
Gave a laugh as in scorn,
"Is the Griffin indeed such a glutton?
Let him eat up the rams,
And the lambs, and theirs dams—
If I hate any meat, it is mutton!"

"Nay, your Worship," said then
The most bald of old men,
"For a sheep we would hardly thus cavil,
If the merciless Beast
Did not oftentimes feast
On the Pilgrims, and people that travel."

"Feast on what," cried the Knight,
Whilst his eye glisten'd bright
With the most diabolical flashes—
"Does the Beast dare to prey
On the road and highway?
With our proper diversion that clashes!"

"Yea, 'tis so, and far worse,"
Said the Clown, "to our curse;
For by way of a snack or a tiffin,
Every week in the year
Sure as Sundays appear,
A young virgin is thrown to the Griffin!"

THE KNIGHT AND THE DRAGON. 473

" Ha ! Saint Peter ! Saint Mark
Roar'd the Knight, frowning dark,
With an oath that was awful and bitter :
" A young maid to his dish !
Why, what more could he wish,
If the Beast were High-born, and a Ritter !

•
" Now, by this our good brand,
And by this our right hand,
By the badge that is borne on our banners,
If we can but once meet
With the monster's retreat,
We will teach him to poach on our manors !"

Quite content with this vow,
With a scrape and a bow,
The glad peasants went home to their flagons,
Where they tipp'd so deep,
That each clown in his sleep
Dreamt of killing a legion of dragons !

Thus engaged, the bold Knight
Soon prepared for the fight
With the wily and scaly marauder ;
But, ere battle began,
Like a good Christian man,
First he put all his household in order.

474 THE KNIGHT AND THE DRAGON.

"Double bolted and barr'd
Let each gate have a guard"—
(Thus his rugged Lieutenant was bidden)
"And be sure, without fault,
No one enters the vault
Where the Church's gold vessels are hidden.

"In the dark oubliette
Let yon merchant forget
That he e'er had a bark richly laden—
And that desperate youth,
Our own rival forsooth!
Just indulge with a kiss of the Maiden!

"Crush the thumbs of the Jew
With the vice and the screw,
Till he tells where he buried his treasure;
And deliver our word
To yon sullen caged bird,
That to-night she must sing for our pleasure!"

Thereupon, *cap-à-pie*,
As a champion should be,
With the bald-headed peasant to guide him,
On his war-horse he bounds,
And then, whistling his hounds,
Prances off to what fate may betide him;

Nor too long do they seek,
Ere a horrible reek,
Like the fumes from some villanous tavern,
Set the dogs on the snuff,
For they scent well enough
The foul monster coil'd up in his cavern!

Then alighting with speed
From his terrified steed,
Which he ties to a tree for the present,
With his sword ready drawn,
Strides the Ritter High-horn,
And along with him drags the scared peasant!

"O Sir Knight, good Sir Knight!
I am near enough quite—
I have shown you the beast and his grotto:"
But before he can reach
Any farther in speech,
He is stricken stone-dead by Sir Otto!

Who withdrawing himself
To a high rocky shelf,
Sees the monster his tail disentangle
From each tortuous coil,
With a sudden turmoil,
And rush forth the dead peasant to mangle.

With his terrible claws,
And his horrible jaws,
He soon moulds the warm corse to a jelly !
Which he quickly sucks in
To his own wicked skin
And then sinks at full stretch on his belly.

Then the Knight softly goes
On the tips of his toes
To the greedy and slumbering savage,
And with one hearty stroke
Of his sword, and a poke.
Kills the beast that had made such a ravage.

So, extended at length,
Without motion or strength,
That gorged serpent they call the constrictor,
After dinner, while deep
In lethargical sleep,
Falls a prey to his Hottentot victor.

" 'Twas too easy by half !"
Said the Knight with a laugh ;
" But as nobody witness'd the slaughter,
I will swear, knock and knock,
By Saint Winifred's clock,
We were at it three hours and a quarter !"

Then he chopped off the head
Of the monster so dread,
Which he tied to his horse as a trophy;
And, with hounds, by the same
Ragged path that he came,
Home he jogg'd proud as Sultan or Sophi!

Blessed Saints! what a rout
When the news flew about,
And the carcass was fetch'd in a waggon;
What an outcry rose wild
From man, woman, and child—
“Live Sir Otto, who vanquish'd the Dragon!”

All that night the thick walls
Of the Knight's feudal halls
Rang with shouts for the wine-cup and flagon;
Whilst the vassals stood by,
And repeated the cry—
“Live Sir Otto, who vanquish'd the Dragon!”

The next night, and the next,
Still the fight was the text,
’Twas a theme for the minstrels to brag on!
And the vassals' hoarse throats
Still re-echoed the notes—
“Live Sir Otto, who vanquish'd the Dragon!”

478 THE KNIGHT AND THE DRAGON.

There was never such work
 Since the days of King Stork,
 When he lived with the Frogs at free quarters;
 Not to name the invites
 That were sent down of night
 To the vill'gers' wives and their daughters!

It was first upon feast,
 For good cheer never ceased,
 And a foray replenish'd the flagon
 And the vassals stood by
 But more weak was the cry —
 "Live Sir Otto who vanquish'd the Dragon!"

Down again sank the sun,
 Nor were revels yet done—
 But as if every mouth had a flagon
 Though the vassals drew
 Drove a word or a sound
 Of "Sir Otto who vanquish'd the Dragon!"

There was feasting still
 But through the village so cold
 Down below there was wailing and hunger,
 And affliction ran cold,
 And the food of the old
 It was wolfishly snatch'd by the younger!

Mad with troubles so vast,
Where's the wonder at last
If the peasants quite alter'd their motto!—
And with one loud accord
Cried out "Would to the Lord,
That the Dragon had vanquish'd Sir Otto!"

DECEMBER AND MAY.

SAID Nestor, to his pretty wife, quite sorrowful one day,
"Why, dearest, will you shed in pearls those lovely eyes
away?"

You ought to be more fortified;" "Ah, brute, be
quiet, do,

I know I'm not so fortified, nor fiftyfold, as you!

"Oh, men are vile deceivers all, as I have ever heard,

You'd die for me you swore, and I—I took you at your
word

I was a tradesman's widow then—a pretty change I've
made;

To live, and die the wife of one, a widower by trade!"

"Come, come, my dear, these flighty airs declare, in
sober truth,

You want as much in age, indeed, as I can want in youth;

Besides, you said you liked old men, though now at me
you huff."

"Why, ye-," she said, "and so I do—but you're not old
enough!"

"Come, come, my dear, let's make it up, and have a
quiet hive,

I'll be the best of men,—I mean,—I'll be the best *alive*!
Your grieving so will kill me, for it cuts me to the core."—

"I thank ye, sir, for telling me—for now I'll grieve the
more!"

RONDEAU.

To-day, it is my natal day,
And threescore years have passed away,
While Time has turned to silver-gray
My hairs.

Pursuing pleasure, love, and fun,
A longish *course* I've had to run,
And, thanks to Fortune, I have won
My hares.

But now, exhausted in the race,
No longer I can go the pace,
And others must take up the chase,
My heirs.

SONNET TO A SONNET.

RARE Composition of a Poet-Knight,
Most chivalrous amongst chivalric men,
Distinguish'd for a polish'd lance and pen
In tuneful contest, and the tourney-fight ;
Lustrous in scholarship, in honour bright,
Accomplish'd in all graces current then,
Humane as any in historic ken,
Brave, handsome, noble, affable, polite,
Most courteous to that race become of late
So fiercely scornful of all kind advance,
Rude, bitter, coarse, implacable in hate
To Albion, plotting ever her mischance, --
Alas ! fair Verse, how false and out of date
Thy phrase "*sweet enemy*" applied to France

TO C. DICKENS, ESQ.
ON HIS DEPARTURE FOR AMERICA.

PSAW, away with leaf and berry,
And the sober-sided cup !
Bring a goblet, and bright sherry,
And a bumper fill me up !

Though a pledge I had to shiver,
And the longest ever was !

* Ere his vessel leaves our river,
I would drink a health to Boz :
Here's success to all his antics,
Since it pleases him to roam,
And to paddle o'er Atlantics,
After such a *sale* at home !
May he shun all rocks whatever !
And each shallow sand that lurks,
And his passage be as clever
As the best among his works.

TO SAMBO.

Come all ye sable little girls and boys,
Ye coal-black Brothers—Sooty Sisters, come,
With kitty-katties make a joyful noise ;
With snaky-snekies, and the Eboe drum !
From this day forth your freedom is your own :
Play, Sambo, play,—and, Obadiah, groan !

Ye vocal Blackbirds, bring your native pipes,
Your own *Moor's* Melodies, ye niggers, bring
To celebrate the fall of chains and stripes,
Sing “ Possum up a gum-tree,” roar and sing !
From this day forth your freedom is your own :
Chaunt, Sambo, chaunt,—and, Obadiah, groan !

Bring all your woolly pickaninnies dear—

Bring John Canoe and all his jolly gang :
Stretch ev'ry blubber-mouth from ear to ear,
And let the driver in his whip go hang !
From this day forth your freedom is your own :
Grin, Sambo, grin,—and, Obadiah, groan !

Your working garb indignantly renounce ;

Discard your slops in honour of the day—
Come all in fill, and furbelow, and flounce,
Come all as fine as Chimney Sweeps in May—
From this day forth your freedom is your own :
Dress, Sambo, dress,—and, Obadiah, groan !

Come, join together in the dewy dance,

With melting maids in steamy mazes go ;
Humanity delights to see you prance,
Up with your sooty legs and jump Jim Crow—
From this day forth your freedom is your own :
Skip, Sambo, skip,—and, Obadiah, groan !

Kiss dark Diana on her pouting lips,

And take black Phoebe by her ample waist—
Tell them to-day is Slavery's eclipse,
And Love and Liberty must be embraced—
From this day forth your freedom is your own ;
Kiss, Sambo, kiss,—and, Obadiah, groan !

With bowls of sangaree and toddy come !
Bring lemons, sugar, old Madeira, limes,
Whole tanks and water-barrels full of rum,
To toast the whitest date of modern times—
From this day forth your freedom is your own :
Drink, Sambo, drink—and, Obadiah, groan !

Talk, altogether, talk ! both old and young,
Pour out the fulness of the negro heart ;
Let loose the now emancipated tongue,
And all your new-born sentiments impart—
From this day forth your freedom is your own :
Spout, Sambo, spout,—and, Obadiah, groan !

Huzza ! for equal rights and equal laws ;
The British parliament has doff'd your chain—
Join, join in gratitude your jerry paws,
And swear you never will be slaves again—
From this day forth your freedom is your own :
Swear, Sambo, swear,—and, Obadiah, groan !

